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THE LAWS OF PROVIDENCE

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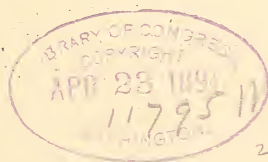
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THE
LAWS OF PROVIDENCE

BY
FATHER HENRY RAMIÈRE

OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS



PHILADELPHIA
MESSENGER OF THE SACRED HEART
114 South Third Street

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BY REV. R. S. DEWEY, S. J.

THE present treatise forms the entire first part of Father Ramière's work on *The Hopes of the Church*. It is complete in itself, and is now published separately as a number of the *Sacred Heart Library*. This is a periodical publication of standard expositions of the theological principles which lie at the base of Catholic devotion. Among all Christians there is no more fundamental truth than the doctrine of Providence, in which we are taught to see the essential Fatherhood of God over the creatures of His hand. It would be difficult to find a more satisfactory exposition of this doctrine, in its application to the Church and the world, than that which is here given by one who was at once a professional teacher of theology and a successful expounder of theological doctrine to Christians in general. It is not unworthy of the great reputation won for the author by his classical book on *The Apostleship of Prayer*. The only change that has been made in the text has been the omission of a few lines referring to the other parts of the work, along with which it originally appeared.

R. S. DEWEY, S. J.

Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas, 7 March, 1891.

INTRODUCTION.

PROVIDENCE is that attribute of God by which He directs the action of all His creatures, and in particular that of beings endowed with reason, toward the end He assigned them in creating them.

From this simple notion there is an evident consequence. We can understand nothing in the happenings of this world unless we know the laws of Providence. Those who seek elsewhere than in the knowledge of these laws the explanation of the destinies of society are as wise as he who would seek outside of the laws of astronomy for an explanation of the movements of the heavenly bodies.

A wilful and culpable ignorance of these laws of Providence is at the bottom of all the gross errors into which a great number of pretended philosophers have fallen in our day. But, for many Christians also, the forgetfulness of these laws is the cause of a fatal discouragement.

How can we otherwise explain the strange contrast between the spirit of the Christian religion and the character of the greater number of those who practise it? In this holy religion everything tends to uplift souls and to enkindle in them boundless desires. "Lift up your hearts on high," the Church cries without ceasing—*Sursum corda!* Whatever is earthly and finite she calls on us to despise as un-

worthy of us. She shows us the Infinite alone as the goal toward which we should tend—the Infinite in duration, the Infinite in greatness, the Infinite in bliss. To reach this glorious goal she offers us, once again, the infinite power of grace as our armor of strength: the infinite price of the Blood of God, which she gives us for our redemption; the infinite dignity of Divine adoption, which she confers upon us even here as the pledge of the inheritance prepared for us in a better life.

It would seem, then, that Christians should be the most courageous and most confident of all men. While they scorn all that springs from their own nothingness, they should join with this generous humility a proud esteem of the heavenly gifts which they have received from God. You would expect to see them holding high their heads in the midst of their more unfortunate fellows, who have no other support than error and no other hope than final nothingness.

And yet it is almost just the contrary which we see. Little-mindedness is the capital vice of the servants of God, just as pride is the capital vice of His enemies. How often do we see the heirs of the promises wretchedly wavering and finally yielding to fatal discouragement? At the most, they think they are doing quite enough if they can preserve faith and hope in the midst of the scandals around them.

Once more, how can you explain this deplorable state of things, unless you acknowledge that a very

great number of Christians do not know how to consider in their true light the happenings of the world around them? They know the laws of Providence, but they mistake their application. They have a divine torch ready to their hand, but because they know not how to hold it up with a firm hand, they let themselves go forward in the midst of darkness. Instead of looking upon the facts of which they are witnesses as a shining confirmation of the truths taught them by their faith, they imagine that they find in them, on the contrary, a constant refutation of her divine teachings. The moral world offers to their bleared eyes only a confusion a thousand times darker than the chaos whence sprang the physical world.

In consequence, what is sure to happen? At the very moment of victory, discouragement seizes hold of the soldier. Lost in the midst of the boundless field of battle, blinded by the dust and deafened by the cries of contending warriors and worn out by fatigue, he sees around him only tumultuous movements and discerns not the end toward which they tend, nor the result which they should produce. Meanwhile the general, whose genius animates and directs this immense multitude, sees his orders executed with care by his soldiers; and the enemy himself helps unknowingly to the realization of his plan. The general, then, already feels the certainty of success, and is intoxicated with the glory of his triumph.

A like assurance should be the fruit of the con-

siderations which we are to present to the Christian reader in the course of this book. Evidently, we cannot produce this result, unless we can keep steadily to the point of view whence the Supreme Arbiter of things directs human events. This is the only end of the present work.

We shall lay down, as exactly as possible, the laws which Divine Providence imposes on the wills of men and obliges them to work out, without in any way destroying their free will. We shall set forth the plan of battle which the Mighty Head of the City of God has followed without variation from the beginning of the world, in the strife waged against Him by the passions of men and the malice of hell. Thus we may succeed in dispelling the sad illusion which causes us to see only disorder in that moral order which is a thousand times more admirable than the physical order.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST LAW OF PROVIDENCE: WHATEVER IS DONE IN
THE WORLD, TENDS TO GLORIFY GOD.

THIS law is the essential and immutable basis of the whole moral order. It is the rule by which everything must be measured, and the principle from which all other laws must flow. If this is admitted, the relations of the creature with the Creator and of men among themselves, can be brought into order with the greatest ease. If it is denied, there is no more order or morality or duty. Selfish interests and brutal passions alone remain standing as the foundation of human society: in other words, all that is left from which to bring forth order are those very things which cause disorder.

We cannot, therefore, dispense ourselves from laying down solidly this fundamental law. In view of this necessity, the reader will pardon us for presenting him with considerations more or less abstract. Even should it cost us an effort, we ought to think ourselves happy to be able, under God's own guidance, to lift ourselves up to those luminous heights whence we may contemplate in its sublime unity the immense movement which He imprints on His creation.

The most precious enjoyment of the scholar is experienced when, after long labors, he at last has grasped the law which governs the movement of a star in its orbit. How much sweeter should be the satisfaction of our own understanding, if we can but acquire the certainty of having found that highest law which all the worlds obey.

This law is expressed in our formula. To understand it better, we will, first of all, consider it in itself; then we will examine it in its application to the present order of things. But we shall much more easily understand its generality after we have analyzed it into a certain number of particular laws, which form, in a way, its different parts.

I.

The glory of God is the prime and essential end of creation.

I. Let us place ourselves at the beginning of things. Going back through the course of the ages, we come to that first moment when the world came forth from nothingness at the voice of the Most High. Let us go yet further back. If our imagination refuses us here, our reason, at least, has this power. We can very clearly conceive that, before the beginning of time, God existed alone, and that even then He was fully sufficient to Himself. The earth had not yet begun its revolutions around the sun.

The sun did not yet flood the heavens with its light and heat. Space was dumb and void : or rather, it was full of God alone, speaking unto Himself, showing forth unto Himself His Infinite Glory, and rejoicing in His own bliss.

What motive could have led God, so infinitely rich and happy, to come forth from His repose to create the world? Evidently, not the desire of perfecting Himself, or the need of acquiring something. What could He expect from His creature, when His creature could have nothing except from Him? Since He was to give everything, He could receive nothing. Moreover, it is clear that He who exists of Himself must find in Himself whatever is necessary to His own perfection and happiness. Every possible perfection He possesses. There is only one thing which of necessity is shut out from Him—that is, imperfection, nothingness.

God, therefore, could not be moved to create the world by the desire of increasing His own perfection. Only one motive could have determined Him—the desire of spreading beyond Himself something of His own infinite fulness. This desire is an inclination natural to goodness. The less need there is of acquiring, the more is the need felt of communicating. This is a sublime need, infinitely different from that which we experience from the great void we find within ourselves. The need of acquiring something is born from our own poverty and creates in us sorrow and disquiet. Just so the need

of pouring itself forth which springs from the very plenitude of the Divine Goodness is all calm and supreme.

Undoubtedly, God found in His own infinite perfection an object capable of satisfying His infinite faculties. Therefore, without any loss of bliss to Himself, He might forever have abstained from producing anything outside of Himself. But, on the other hand, in His infinite goodness He saw the model and the reason of an infinity of beings who might reproduce outside of Him and in different degrees those perfections which in Him are gathered up in undivided unity. Thus the sun gathers up into the unity of its light the undefined variety of the rays which go forth over all the points of space and reproduce its image. The created rays of which Uncreated Light might become the source, the possible images of His infinite beauty, God loved, yet not of necessity: for without them He was infinitely perfect and infinitely happy. But there was nothing to withhold Him from stretching out to them that necessary love which He has for Himself. He could not love them apart from Himself, for they have nothing lovable apart from Him. Moreover, His power of love, infinite as it is, is fully satiated in His own infinitely lovable perfection. But He could love them in Himself and for Himself.

It is thus that God could create, without losing anything of His own immutability; and while de-

creeing the existence of His creatures, He ceased not to centre in Himself all His acts.

Here, then, is the only end which His wisdom could have had in view when, going forth from His rest, He produced the world: to exercise His own good pleasure and His love in His works; to reproduce in their boundless variety the wonders of His own infinite unity; to communicate, to some more and to some less, features of that beauty beyond compare, which is His own possession in its fulness; and to make them share, each according to its own nature, in His own unutterable bliss.

This was the only end worthy of God. It is also the most glorious end for His creatures.

What could be nobler for a being sprung from nothing than to be called to show forth the Supreme Beauty, and to be loved with that very love with which God loves His own infinite goodness? It is right, then, to say that the external glory of God is the essential end of creation. For by this glory, external to Himself, we mean just this manifestation of perfections of the Creator by His creatures.

This is what Reason, in perfect accord with Faith, reveals to us concerning the origin of things. Creatures can have but one end, because the Creator Himself could have but one end in producing them, namely, His own glory. Undoubtedly, He was free to create or not to create. But if He determined to produce anything outside of Himself, He was not

free to give it any other end than Himself, for the reason that He alone can be the final end of His own actions. He could not, without destroying Himself, dispense himself from centering all things in Himself. He is the first beginning of all things, and it is necessary that He should be also their last end. It is the law of His being. It is a law supremely glorious, imposed by the supreme perfection of His own nature upon His almighty will. What reason have we for astonishment if, being bound Himself by this law, He should impose it on every work that comes forth from His hand?

We cannot deny this first law without refusing our minds to evidence, and at the same time destroying both the notion of God and the notion of the creature. To give to the world in general, and in particular to humanity, any other end, we must choose one of two things: either we must uphold that humanity is an effect without a cause, and that instead of being created by God it has been produced simply from nothing; or we must pretend that humanity has received from God no end worthy of Him, and that the Divine Workman, in producing this masterpiece of His hands, has acted by chance, not knowing what He did. That is, we must deny to God either power or wisdom: and this is equivalent to denying Him any existence, for a God Who should not be infinitely powerful and infinitely wise would no longer be God.

Before, then, entering on an examination of the relations which human events may have with the glory of God, we can rest assured, in virtue of the most evident of all reasoning, that without fail they must end in exalting the Divine glory. Reason as well as Faith tells us that if the least movement of the least atom did not tend directly or indirectly toward this end, it would be necessary to deny, along with the existence of God, all truth and all evidence.

This assurance is of itself sufficient to strengthen our minds in the midst of the storms that shake the earth. What though darkness surround us and evil seem to prevail? What though the enemies of God triumph, the ground tremble beneath our feet, and the stars of the firmament fall into the abyss, still we may close our eyes and await with confidence the return of light. Even though the night should last as long as the world lasts, still it could not resist the sun of eternity. The tempest will pass, and its furious disorder will be found to have wrought powerfully for the consummation of God's order.

II. Let us try to understand better yet that what we have said is of the most absolute necessity. For this, it is enough to consider that when God in the counsels of His Wisdom determined to create the world, He foresaw, not confusedly, but in their least details, all the happenings of which this world was to be the stage. He saw, shut up in the treasures of His might, an infinity of other possible worlds, whose production would have given room to a more or less

complete manifestation of His attributes. By a choice that was perfectly free, He preferred the world of which we form a part to all those which He left in nothingness. Now, He would not have been free to make this choice, if a single one of the happenings which He foresaw were to be accomplished in this world had been contrary to His own end. Of course, He was master in His own creation, and might demand of it a higher or a lower degree of that external glory which alone it is capable of giving Him. But He was not master in the sense that He could dispense any of the elements which make up Creation from accomplishing in its whole extent the design which He had conceived when He produced them.

Moreover, we know that nothing is done here below without God's concurrence. A creature is not less incapable of self-preservation, of self-movement, of acting on other creatures, without God's aid, than it was incapable of coming forth from nothing without the help of His hand. It is, then, in God and through God that all men move and act, even those who give no heed to obeying Him and all whose movements tend to the direct contrary of His designs. It is clear to everyone that God could not preserve them in their liberty and lend His concurrence to all their acts, were He not certain of drawing His own glory from each of those acts and of constraining their indocile liberty to His own service, even from their very revolt.

The animal man, if he chooses, may see in the movements which agitate human society, only what is patent to the eyes of the flesh—the blind and disordered strife of interests and passions. But we should be able, with the double light of Reason and of Faith, to discern God everywhere present, everywhere acting, and making use of the most rebellious instruments to reach His own ends.

“Behold,” says the Spouse in the Canticles, “He standeth behind our wall, looking through the windows, looking through the lattices.” (ii. 9.)

All creation is but this transparent wall through which the Christian soul knows well how to perceive the Eternal Love. Those who have not the sense of God see everywhere only nothingness and disorder ; but the unerring instinct of Faith knows how to discern the all powerful action of the Sovereign Order weaving from all the scattered threads its wondrous web. That which is an impenetrable veil to the eyes of the flesh is to Faith a manifestation full of light. Faith knows that the present is nothing in itself, and has no reality except as a preparation for the eternal future. Faith fixes her gaze on that which is eternal in the present, on that which is divine in the human ; and she knows not how to see aught else. Those who see aught else, see nothing. They see less than nothing, for they see falsehood. What they call great designs, important events, successes, reverses, what are they all but shadows that pass and chase before them other shadows, all alike

to be seen and then to vanish in the depths of eternal nothingness? And what remains of it? Just that result which God had in view, and for which His very enemies have labored without willing it.

Great is the peace and sweet the light which has dawned on him who succeeds in piercing through the shades of created things, and sees across the deceitful and fleeting vision the changeless truth. He has lifted himself above the discordant noises of the world, which no longer strike his ear except when, in the mingling concert of the material and spiritual creation, their very dissonances bring out all the Divine harmony.

Yet it must be acknowledged that it is not easy for our understanding to lift itself up to this height, and with the eye of the spirit to embrace this harmonious unity of all things. Reason tells us that everything must be in order under a God Who is infinitely wise; but experience seems to assure us of the contrary, at least so far as the moral world is concerned. How can we reconcile these two opposing witnesses? How can we bring into accord that which is and that which ought to be? How can we explain the disorder of society in the midst of universal harmony? For this we must know the special designs of God concerning His rational and free creatures. This is to be the object of our second study.

II.

In the present order, God wills to be glorified by making man divine.

I. To understand this law, and to grasp its exact meaning, it is enough to make application to humanity of those general principles which we have established with regard to creation.

God, we said, could have no other motive to determine Him to create than the desire of manifesting, outside of Himself, His divine attributes and of pouring forth upon the beings which have come from His hands the effusion of His own infinite fulness.

Now, among all creatures, those whose nature best represents the divine perfection, those who are the most capable of receiving the communication of His divine bliss, are beyond all contradiction creatures that are endowed with reason, namely, angels and men. It is in them, therefore, that God, most of all, will realize the designs of love which led Him to create. It is in them, most of all, that He will find His glory.

He at once finds His glory in the production of the soul, a substance spiritual like Himself and like Himself immortal; whose simplicity, the image of His own ineffable simplicity, still comprises in itself so wonderful a multiplicity of acts and powers; and whose being, intelligence, and will reproduce the Trinity of His own Persons: which, last of all,

knowing Him and loving Him, as He knows and loves Himself, experiences even like Him the glorious impossibility of finding its full satisfaction elsewhere than in the possession of the infinite.

Therefore God draws great glory from the creation of man, but this glory is only the beginning of that which He set before Himself when He gave man being. It is most of all by the happiness of His reasonable creature, by the development of its faculties, by the intercourse of love which He disposes it to enter upon with Himself, that He intends to be glorified.

This is all very different from those purely material beings who receive from the creative action of God every element of their perfection, and who have only to suffer themselves passively to be clothed by His munificence with the adornments of their beauty. On the contrary, the free being is called to work along with God in perfecting itself. According as this being lends or refuses to God its concurrence, the nature which it received when drawn forth from nothing will take the first or the last place in the hierarchy of created beings.

This is why the Scripture notices that, after producing each of His other works, God rejoiced within Himself, and bore witness of their beauty. *God saw that they were good.* On the contrary, when He had created man, He kept silence. He recognized that there were still many things wanting to this work, which was yet the most perfect of all. *It is not good*

that man should be alone. Why, then, should society be necessary to him, unless because he is incomplete in himself and has need to come to the completion of himself by his own labor, aided by the help of those like him. The Divine Workman did not believe it right to rejoice in His masterpiece and declare it to be truly good, until, after long trial, He should have brought it to its perfection and fully developed and fully satisfied the faculties which He had given to it when He created it. *Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord.*

II. But the happiness which God designs for His reasonable creature, by which alone it can give Him the glory which He expects from it; this intercourse which He designs to set up with His creature, and for which He expects its free co-operation; this perfection which the creature is to add to that perfection already received from the Creator, may be of more than one kind.

First of all, there was a natural perfection and a natural happiness in store for it. This happiness would, in any case, have consisted in the knowledge and love of God; for God is the essential goal of our tendencies, and so long as we do not rest in Him we shall never find peace. The infinite is the home of the reasonable soul; so long as she is held down by the finite and the created she must experience the torments of exile. But, by its nature, it can know the infinite only by the finite, and reach

up to the Creator only by means of His creatures. Man, then, will have reached his natural perfection when he shall know perfectly the highest truth, in so far as it is reflected in the two-fold world of spirit and body ; when he shall love perfectly the Divine Goodness, in so far as it is the fountain-head of all finite good ; when he shall admire uncreated beauty in the great works of nature and the splendors of reason.

The complete development of the faculties of man under these different aspects, the fulness of the knowledge and love and joy of God in creatures and of creatures in God, joined to exemption from all pain and to the certainty of immortality, would have constituted the natural happiness of man.

Would man, in the possession of this happiness, ever have suspected the possibility of a higher bliss ? It is difficult to say. What is certain is that the absence of such bliss would have caused in his faculties no want, properly so called, for our faculties experience a want only when they are deprived of the object which they were naturally destined to attain.

Natural happiness, then, would have sufficed for man. Would it have sufficed equally for God ? Undoubtedly. Who, then, would have had the right to demand from Him aught else ? His creature ? But God owed nothing to the creature and could, had He so wished, have left it in its nothingness. His own wisdom ? But God was bound by His own

wisdom only to satisfy fully the faculties and desires of the beings sprung from His hands.

Therefore, even though He had granted to His creature no other perfection and no other happiness, still He would have acquired rights to the undying gratitude of His creature. His justice would have been fully satisfied, and His wisdom could have demanded nothing more.

But what would have been sufficient to the wisdom and justice of God could not suffice to His goodness. That natural felicity which would have satisfied fully the faculties of man could not content the unspeakable need which God feels to communicate Himself. It was too little for Him to grant us in an image, however excellent it may have been, His own life and blessedness. It was necessary that He should give us Himself; that He should make us enter into participation of His own nature, of His own light, of His own love; and that, at the end of our trial, He should become Himself the object of our bliss, by admitting us to the clear vision of His beauty and the enjoyment of His infinite goodness.

This destiny of the reasonable creature to enjoy during eternity every happiness of God and to share, even during the time of trial, in God's nature and faculties, in God's light and love, is what we call the supernatural order.

III. The supernatural order, indeed, with everything that goes to make it up, is not only infinitely above the weak and wounded nature of man, not

only above the purest angelic nature and the aspirations of the sublimest cherub, but it is even beyond the most perfect of all the creatures God beholds at the summit of the limitless hierarchy of possible beings. The lowest act which belongs to this order excels the most wondrous of the prodigies of the natural order. For these acts, in a very true sense, are divine acts. I mean acts divine by communication, just as the acts of God Himself are divine by nature.

But it is important to gain a very exact idea of this making divine of man, which is the end of all the designs of Providence and the summing up of the Christian religion.

Here we pass between two rocks which we must shun with equal care ; pantheism, which is the exaggeration or rather the diabolical counterfeit of the supernatural order, and naturalism, which is its negation. We must hold pantheism in abhorrence ; but we must not for that feel obliged to share the timidity of certain minds who, with every good intention, lean far too much toward naturalism, through fear of dashing against the rock of pantheism. Lest they should too closely identify man with God, they dare not seriously consider that union which God's goodness desires to contract with the wretchedness of man. Through excess of reverence for Sovereign Majesty, they do violence to the most express words of Sovereign Truth.

These fears are as unreasonable in their motive

as they are dangerous in their result. That which makes the strength of pantheism, that which in every age has given it such a power of attraction wherewith to fascinate the greatest souls, is its appearance of satisfying the desire which God placed in our heart when He raised us to the supernatural order. Man will cease to dream of his absorption into God, once he shall know how easy it is to enter into participation with the nature of God. Let us, then, make Him know how He is to be made divine by the union which constitutes the supernatural order, and then He will have only horror for the absurd making divine by identity, which constitutes pantheism.

Order, speaking generally, is the adaptation of means to a given end. The end and the means—these are the elements of all order; and as the means find the reason of their being in the end, it is the end which first of all we must endeavor to know in order to acquire an exact idea of any order whatever.

What, then, is the supernatural end of God's reasonable creature? We have seen that the natural end consists in the knowledge, love, and possession of God, in so far as He shows Himself and gives himself to us through His creatures. On the contrary, the supernatural end is the knowledge of God seen immediately in Himself, by His own light; it is the enjoyment of God loved by His own love; it is, consequently, the possession of God's own happiness. For what is it that makes the bliss of God if it be not the perfect sight, the infinite love, and the full

possession of His own infinite beauty? Let Him communicate this sight, this love, and this possession, and He will also communicate His bliss.

This communication is precisely that which constitutes the supernatural end.

The soul which has reached this blessed end no longer sees God in creation as in a mirror; she does not catch, here and there, scattered glimpses of His perfections; she sees Him *face to face* (1 Corinthians, xiii. 12); she plunges her gaze into the very depths of Eternal Light; she is overwhelmed in that ocean which fills with its infinite fulness God's own infinite faculties. She *enters into the joy of her Lord* (St. Matthew, xxv. 21); she drinks of the *torrent of God's pleasure* (Psalm xxxv. 9); and as the understanding and will of necessity reproduce in themselves the image of the objects on which they fasten, so the soul, all penetrated with the splendors of Divine Light and the ardors of Divine Charity, becomes in all things *like to God* (1 St. John, iii. 2). She becomes fast bound to Him in the bonds of a love as blissful as it is resistless, and henceforth she makes with Him but *one Spirit* (1 Corinthians, vi. 17).

Such is the supernatural end. It is the becoming divine when completed. Between it and pantheism there is all the distance which separates Divinity from nothingness. For pantheism, while it pretends to absorb the soul into the Infinite, ends only in the soul's annihilation. On the contrary, the super-

natural end causes the soul to preserve her being, her personality, her faculties. It is herself that knows, that loves, that enjoys: but she knows through God's Word, she loves in God's Spirit, and she rejoices in God's bliss. She remains whole and entire, and yet God becomes unto her *all in all* (1 Corinthians, xv. 28.) She is all in Him as He is all in her. She is not God, but she has been made divine. She is truly and really admitted to be *made partaker of the divine nature* (2 St. Peter, i. 4). It is not because the Divine nature has divided itself and come forth from itself to be transformed into the nature of the soul. On the contrary, the Divine nature has transformed the soul into itself by uniting itself to her, whole and entire as she is.

Such a dignity granted to a creature can only be supernatural, utterly and absolutely supernatural. It is supernatural for man, the last of a numberless species of reasonable beings: it is equally supernatural for the most perfect of the pure spirits, for the highest of seraphim. It was supernatural for Adam in the state of innocence, as it is for his descendants fallen and guilty. It is supernatural in this sense that the forces of our nature cannot reach up to it; but it is also supernatural in the sense that our own spirit could never naturally have more than a very vague suspicion of its existence, and the natural desires of our heart would not draw us toward it. Thus St. Paul, after the Prophet Isaias, says: *Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered*

into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for those that love Him (Isaias, lxiv. 4; 1. Corinthians, ii. 9).

God in no wise owed to us our elevation to this end and our privilege to taste this bliss. That He has done this is by the freest exercise of His own goodness. He had acted freely when by creation He gave us our finite being, but He has acted not less freely when, by our elevation to the supernatural order, He has destined us to possess His own infinite Being. The second of these gifts is, if it were possible, yet more gratuitous than the first.

IV. But if the supernatural end is purely gratuitous inasmuch as it is our destiny, it cannot be so inasmuch as it is to be our recompense. We had no right that God should offer it to us, but once it has pleased God to offer it we are bound to acquire it. It is an essential law of the free being that he, with God, should be author of his own happiness, and that he can be glorified by His Creator during eternity only inasmuch as he shall have glorified his Creator in time. This law will have its application in the supernatural order, just as it would have had it in the natural order. Equally in both orders the end should be a *recompense*, and must consequently be acquired by *merit*.

But what means can there be of meriting a share in the bliss of God, in the clear vision of His beauty, in the enjoyment of His love?

If merit, to be truly merit, must keep perfect proportion with the recompense, will it not be necessary if man is to merit a Divine end that He should be in possession of Divine means? Beyond all doubt; and for this reason the making divine of man which is to be terminated in heaven by glory begins and is perfected here below by *grace*. Grace, therefore, is the seed of glory. The one and the other are made up of the same elements; but these elements, which are imperfect in the former, reach their perfection only in the latter.

We have said that union with God by glory includes the clear sight of God by His own light, union with God in virtue of His love, and finally the enjoyment of God's own bliss. In grace also we shall find these three kinds of union. It, too, will make us know God by His own light, that is, by faith; love God with His own love, that is, by charity; it will also make us tend toward God's own bliss, by hope.

But, whereas the light of glory is the sense of God present and unveiling Himself entirely, the light of faith is the sense of God absent, revealing Himself only by His words. And whereas the enjoyment of heaven results from a thirst ever burning anew for a pleasure which ever satisfies, the hope of earth sighs toward that divine bliss without ever attaining to it. Finally, whereas the charity of heaven embraces the infinite beauty which it loves,

the charity of earth loves without yet embracing the object of its love.

In this wise the acts of the theological virtues, which are the principal forms of grace, differ from those acts by which the blessed soul rejoices in glory, only inasmuch as the former strain after their object, which is absent, while the latter attain it in its immediate presence. On the side of the soul the movement is the same. Up above, she plunges into the ocean of God's goodness, by virtue of that impulse which she had gained here below through the exercise of virtue. The same love which holds the martyr fast bound on the scaffold in the midst of torments, makes him taste ineffable delights as soon as death has opened to him the gates of heaven. God gives Himself to all of the elect according to their capacity for receiving Him, but this capacity is different according as they have developed it more or less here on earth by the exercise of virtue. The more they have increased here below in their souls, under the influences of grace, the hunger and thirst after God, the more shall they be filled in heaven.

Grace then is not only the seed of glory: it is also its beginning and its measure.

By grace as well as by glory the Divinity communicates itself to the soul, but it does not communicate itself under the same aspect. In reality, in the inmost life of God there are two distinct aspects: He is at once Infinite Intelligence and In-

finite Truth, Supreme Love and Supreme Goodness, Sovereign Activity and Perfect Rest. These two elements are equally necessary to His bliss. This bliss would not be infinite, did it not consist in the infinite satisfaction of an infinite tendency. Yet bliss especially consists in the fulness of satisfaction. The intensity of the tendency rather constitutes holiness. Now, by grace it is under this latter aspect that God communicates Himself to us most of all; He communicates to us His own sense with which to know His truth, and His Spirit with which to love His beauty. But this truth and this beauty He holds still veiled from us and waits for their final communication until the twilight of probation has given place to the splendors of glory.

In this way everything is understood; and the Divine life, first of all deposited in the soul as an imperceptible germ, goes on developing itself little by little during the whole period of growth, until, having reached its full maturity, it produces its own fruit, which is eternal bliss.

On the contrary, there would be a plain disproportion between the end and the means, supernatural merit would be no longer merit and the supernatural order itself would be simply disorder, if grace were not like glory a true *participation in the Divine Nature*.

Accordingly, it is to grace that this qualification is given by the Holy Scriptures. The just man of the earth, as well as the blessed in heaven, is truly a

being made divine ; and this making divine is so real and so certain that the holy Doctors rely upon it to demonstrate the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, who is its Author. Thus St. Cyril of Alexandria asks of the Arians :

“ To make divine those beings who in their nature have nothing that is divine, is it not necessary that there should be a higher power than that of a simple creature? How can you imagine a creature that makes divine? God alone has this power, and He exercises it when by His Spirit He communicates to holy souls that which He alone possesses as His own.”

In virtue of this communication man, who until then lived only of the animal and reasonable life, begins to lead a higher life, the Divine Life.

This is truly a second birth (St. John, iii. 5). * His first existence dates from the day when a spiritual soul came to vivify his body : he is born a second time when the Spirit of God comes to vivify his soul (St. John, i. 13). † Henceforth there are in him two men that strive the one against the other, as Jacob strove with Esau in the womb of Rebecca. One,

* Amen, Amen, I say unto you, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

† As many as received Him He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His Name, who are born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

the son of man, Esau, is first in order of age ; but the second, Jacob, the son of God, the heir of the promises, strives to supplant his brother. Like every child of Adam, the Christian finds in himself carnal instincts which lead him toward the earth. But in him these earthly inclinations are combated by ineffable desires which lift him unceasingly on high, and make him despise the things which pass. Henceforth, as in a little world, he gathers together in himself and in wondrous harmony all the forces which move this immense universe ; forces that are physical and chemical and vital and spiritual ; and God completes His masterpiece by giving him, with His own Spirit, those forces which are divine. This Divine Spirit, when it comes to dwell in the soul of the Christian, communicates to his intelligence *the mind of God* (1. Corinthians, ii. 16) ; it *pours forth into his heart the charity of God* (Romans, v. 5) ; it becomes the starting point of all his tendencies, the motive power of all his actions. The animal is led by instinct, man is moved by reason, the Christian is *led by the Spirit of God* (Romans, viii. 14). It is by the Spirit of God that he judges of all things ; by the Spirit of God he prays and sends up to Heaven *unspeakable groanings*, to which God cannot remain deaf (Romans, viii. 26, 27). The Divine Spirit is for him, as it were, a second memory, and suggests to him at seasonable times whatever it is needful that he should know (St. John, xiv. 26). This Holy Spirit is his Counsel, and

guides him by an interior unction which leaves him no doubt as to that which he ought to do (1. St. John, ii. 27): the Holy Spirit inspires him, putting into his mouth that which he ought to say (St. Matthew, x. 20). Hidden in the depths of our corruptible nature, as the living germ in the midst of the grain of corn, the Holy Spirit causes life to spring from the bosom of death, and with unceasing labor fashions and transforms to the resemblance of God every soul which gives itself up to the Divine action (2. Corinthians, iii. 18). We cannot, then, doubt this truth: in the weariness of our probation, as well as in the blissful repose of our heavenly country, the supernatural life is a life truly divine. Doubtless, this life does not result from the fusion of the created being with the Increate. Also, it does not suppose that man is to subsist by a Divine personality. What it supposes is that man will act divinely. He preserves in all their integrity his being, his personality, his own faculties; but to these natural faculties have been joined virtues which are as supernatural faculties, and with these virtues God Himself comes to unite Himself substantially with the Christian, to make him truly a sharer in His own nature.

Therefore, in grace as in glory, there will be something created and something uncreated. Just as in heaven the blessed souls enlightened by the splendors of God's Word receive into themselves a light which makes them like to that Divine Sun and

capable of union with Him, so on earth the soul united by grace to the Holy Ghost receives into itself, either by passing impulses or by permanent qualities, the influences of this Divine Spirit. But, just as in Heaven the light of glory hinders not that the union of the soul with the Word of God should be immediate, so on earth created grace does not prevent the soul from being united immediately with the Holy Ghost.

Let us repeat all this, and would that all Christians that read these pages might understand it. No, it is not a vain figure of speech—this making of man divine which has been shown to us as the end of all the designs of the Creator in the present order: it is the most real of all realities. The Holy Doctors who have received from God a special mission for combating errors that relate to the Holy Ghost, seem to find no expression strong enough, no comparison apt enough to make us, as it were, touch with the hand the closeness of this union by which the Holy Spirit communicates itself to the just soul. Sometimes they compare it to the union of the perfume with the garment, which it completely penetrates with its own odor; sometimes to the union of gold with the viler metals, which it gilds with its own sheen; sometimes to that yet more penetrating action by which fire transforms iron and gives it all its own properties, *ignifies it*, in some manner, yet without taking from it its nature as iron; and sometimes to the communication of all the properties of

wine to the drop of water which is mingled with it.*

These Holy Doctors prove that if this union were not *substantial* in a very real sense, it could not produce the effects which are assigned to it. It is to deliver us from death and to fill us with the life of the Spirit. It is to restore in us the divine image, blotted out by sin. Most of all, it is to make us become the adopted sons of God. Now such effects could not be attributed, they say, to a grace which should be *separated from the very substance of the Holy Ghost*. Hence, they conclude that the *interior dwelling of the Holy Ghost in our souls can alone make us enjoy these advantages*.† These early Doctors surely do not deny that when the Divine Spirit contracts with the just soul this wondrous union, it produces in that soul acts and habits inherent in the soul itself and by means of which it is properly constituted in a supernatural state. Only the followers of Luther could say that justification consisted in the mere application of God's justice and not in a gift inherent in the soul and, consequently, created as is the soul. As to Catholic Doctors, they have never called in doubt the existence in the just soul of a created supernatural light, which is Faith, of a created supernatural love, which is Charity: but

* St. Cyril of Alexandria, I. v. and I. xi., on St. John, VII Dialogue; St. Basil, V. against Eunomians; St. Maximus, Mart., II. xxvi.

† St. Cyril of Alexandria, VII. Dialogue on the Trinity.

what the Holy Fathers have taught, and what we ought to admit with them, is, that the supreme dignity and exaltation of human nature does not so much consist in the reception of these created gifts, however precious they may be, as in the possession of the very *Person of the Holy Ghost Who joins Himself to His gifts and by them dwells in us, vivifies us, adopts us and makes us divine, and impels us to all kinds of good works.**

* These are the words of Cornelius à Lapide, who, in his Commentary on the Prophet Osee, i. 10, gives an admirable development, after the Scriptures and Fathers, of the doctrine which we have summarized concerning the union of the just soul with the Holy Ghost. When, with him, we refer this union to the Holy Ghost, rather than to the other Persons of the Divine Trinity, we only repeat the unvarying language of the Scripture and the Holy Doctors. But we in no wise pretend to separate the Holy Ghost from the other Divine Persons, nor to attribute to Him any action in the soul which They do not produce along with Him. Sound theology could admit nothing like this. Moreover, it could never enter into our design to determine the part which is proper to this Divine Spirit in the work of sanctification, any more than to explain the manner in which He was united to just souls before the Incarnation of the Word. There is here only question of the making divine of the Christian. Now, even those who would maintain that in another order a participation of simple resemblance could place man in a state truly supernatural and divine, cannot deny that the making divine of the Christian consists in a real union with the Divinity. That is all we have wished to establish in this place.

We have thus grasped, in its sublime reality, the great end toward which all the designs of Providence are directed—the making divine of man and of reasonable creatures. To reach this end, God calls to His aid all creation. He sends His angels, who have no more glorious ministry than the training up of souls to prepare them for their heavenly inheritance. Even material creatures contribute, with all their forces, to this great work. St. Paul tells us that *every creature groaneth and travaileth in pain even till now* (Romans, viii. 22), all being called to co-operate in the bringing forth of the children of God.

How fair the day when this great work of the Most High shall at last reach its consummation. Then all creation, which man sums up in himself, shall by means of man return to that Fountain-Head from which it sprung forth. The Infinite, which in some way went forth from itself by creating, shall then return to itself to rest through all eternity with the soul which shall have co-operated in Its designs. The Divine circle will be closed. The Divine resemblance shall shine upon the face of creation with a perfection beyond compare; for the image shall not only be conformed to the Divine Prototype, but shall be united to God so as to shine with His own light. The whole spiritual creation shall live of the divine life, and shall communicate this life to the material creation to which it finds itself united in man as by a precious link. The Creator, fully glori-

fied by His creature, shall cast back upon the creature His own glory. God shall be all in all.

How sublime are the designs of God, and how far are His thoughts above all our conceptions ! How lofty are the destinies of man, and how far they surpass in their true grandeur all the dreams of his pride !

Shall we now be astonished that the Church raises so high her hopes ? She has been commissioned by the All Powerful to communicate His life to man. What help has she not the right to expect from Him in the accomplishment of this sublime mission ? What are all other interests compared to this interest in the eyes of God ? Revolutions of empire and calculations of statesmen, the setting up and the overthrowing of dynasties—what is it all but a little noise that for a moment troubles the narrow sphere of time and shall soon be heard no more ? And shall not God, Who holds all the happenings of time in His hand, know how to make them serve to the great work which He has given in charge to His Church ? Will He not force her very enemies to co-operate in the divine training up of souls whom He destines to share His eternal heritage ?

Clearly, aught else would be impossible. We know not yet in what this co-operation consists ; but this we can say with assurance, that it must be the result of all that happens here below. The Church, which alone holds in deposit the interests of Heaven, equally holds within her hands the destinies of earth. God has established her Queen of Eternity. To her

He has given Time as a slave. However unmanageable this capricious slave may seem, the Sovereign Master will know how to constrain him to help on her work and to labor for the Church when he seems to revolt most against her.

It is this which the designs of God reveal to us. It remains for us now to study the realization of these designs in the world. But here our task becomes more difficult. Scarcely do we turn our eyes from the heavens and focus them upon the earth, than a dark cloud wraps us round about. Sublime as is our destiny, even so our present state is wretched. There we see but light, perfection, order, harmony, bliss; here, on the contrary, we see evil under all its forms and, most of all, moral evil, that is, sin, the essential disorder, the denial of God. How can these sad realities be made to accord with destinies so splendid? How can the glory of God result from all this disorder?

Here we are in presence of the most formidable problem of the moral order. We do not hesitate to look this problem full in the face. The first articles of this law of Providence have made us know the end set before us. The following articles will help us to determine the conditions under which this end must be sought.

III.

The glory of God in the present order is to be the result of a probation.

I. Man's supernatural destiny will be of the greatest help to us in drawing forth light from the midst of the darkness which envelops the world.

The moment that Reason in revolt refuses to admit this destiny, it becomes impossible for her to resolve social problems.

Indeed, to have some little comprehension of the movements which agitate the earth, it is necessary to look upon it as an immense laboratory, wherein day by day the Divine Goodness casts bodies kneaded of clay and souls filled with infirmities, that they may come forth gods.

When we look at things from this point of view, we understand that so immense a labor, which endures but a few days and yet has a result that is to be eternal, cannot be accomplished without violent effort. We are no longer astonished at seeing the Divine Goodness fanning the flame of trial which is to work this wondrous transformation. We do not find it strange that these salutary flames fasten themselves with a kind of fury on the crucible wherein created gods are formed—that is, on the Church.

In fact, if the making divine is the end pursued by Providence, trial is equally the great means by which it attains this end.

We already understand that between our destiny

and that of beings without reason there is this difference that, whereas they receive passively their perfection from the munificence of their Creator, we must acquire it actively, with His help. To see this truth in its completeness, it must be added that we are to acquire it freely.

God, Who might not have created us, freely determined Himself to give us existence. Freely, again, He has called us to share in His own glory. Has not He the right to demand that we in our turn should glorify Him freely? Even supposing that there were no real necessity for Him in this, is it not at least supremely meet that He should make us buy at this price the happiness which He destines for us? Is it not the means of making that liberty, which is the most excellent of His gifts, serve to that end which is necessary to Him?

God, therefore, will not admit man from the moment of his creation to the enjoyment of the heritage which He has destined for him. It is necessary that this happiness should be the work of him who is to enjoy it. His Creator esteems him too much to treat him as a beggar to whom through pity we cast an alms. His condition is that of a soldier on whose brow is placed, after the battle, the crown won by his bravery. This crown shall be so much the more glorious for both man and God, as the combat shall have been ruder, and to gain it the free will shall have had more obstacles to overcome. This is why God seems to hide Himself here below; to abandon His

servants to their own weakness while leaving the field free to His enemies. This is why human events seem to be subjected to no order and to depend only upon the tyranny of interest or the caprices of passion. It is precisely in this that the probation of the faithful soldiers of the Most High consists. From this, consequently, is to result His glory and theirs.

By the constancy with which they shall cling to Him in spite of the scandals and defections of which they may be witnesses ; by the generosity with which they shall sacrifice to Him every advantage which they might find in staying far away from Him ; by the firmness with which they shall bear witness to His light in the very midst of obscurities and clouds with which their understanding may be surrounded ; finally, by the confidence with which they shall give themselves up to His Fatherly goodness at the very moment when they shall be overwhelmed by trial—they shall give to God the greatest glory He can receive from His creature, and they shall enable His justice to confer on them, as a recompense due to their merits, the happiness which His love had predestined for them, without any merit of their own.

It is thus Faith explains the seeming disorder that reigns in the world. The single word “probation” says all, explains all. It is the key of every social enigma. The happenings of this world are as something writ in cypher, which, to the vulgar eye, shows but a disordered collection of capricious lines. Only the initiated understand its hidden

sense, and are able to discover in this seeming disorder a deep design. Thus the Christian finds touching marks of the wisdom and goodness of God there where the unbeliever knows how to see only a cruel lie given to God's Providence. Those tribulations, which for the carnal man are but chastisements and motives of despair, become for him sources of hope from the time when they are shown to him as trials. *We glory also in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience trial, and trial hope, and hope confoundeth not* (Romans, v. 3). He compares their brief duration with the everlasting duration of the reward, and in the infinite disproportion of these two terms he finds strength not only to accept tribulations with patience, but also to embrace them with love and joy. *I am filled with comfort. I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation* (2 Corinthians, vii. 4).

The seeming disorders of society will not then scandalize the Christian who loses not from sight this elementary teaching of his faith. He no longer complains of the abandonment of the just man and the triumph of God's enemies. He does not take it ill that, as the sun shines alike on the good and the evil, so too the thunderbolt strikes indifferently the cottage of the deserving poor man and the palace of the rich usurer. He understands that, if in this life God made the separation between good and evil, there no longer would be room for trial, and consequently the end of this life could not be attained.

That which at first sight would seem to be the establishment of order would, in reality, be a real disorder.

II. We shall have a still more exact idea of the designs of Providence on the world, if we continue our examination of this law of trial, not alone as it is to all intelligent creatures, but in its application to the special condition of humanity.

Human nature, as we know, is the lowest in the hierarchy of intelligent beings, as it is also the first in the hierarchy of sensible beings. It is the link that unites the material creation to the spiritual creation. Below man there is an incalculable number of animal species which have, in common with man, the faculty of feeling and of moving themselves, but are without reason and liberty. In the same way, above him Faith shows us, what reason might have led us to suspect, a no less incalculable number of species of spiritual beings, who have in common with him the faculty of knowing truth and loving good, but who are without the faculty of feeling, such as we have, by corporeal organs.

This relative inferiority of our nature with relation to other spiritual natures ought evidently to have for its result to make our probation far more painful. On the one hand, our intelligence and our will have by themselves much less force for grasping truth and embracing good. On the other hand, the sensitive faculties, whose exercise is inseparable from

that of our reasonable faculties, unceasingly draw down the soul to lower things, to temporal good.

It is, therefore, beyond all comparison more difficult for us than for the pure spirits to attach ourselves to God with a constancy that cannot be shaken, and to render to Him unwaveringly that witness which He demands from all His free creatures during the time of their probation.

It is true that, in the first plan of the Creator, man was to be freed from the greater number of these difficulties. By a privilege which was purely gratuitous and whose transmission to future generations was attached to the faithfulness of our first parents, we were to be free from ignorance, which is the wound of our spirit, and from inordinate desire, which is the wound of our heart. Immortal, not liable to suffer, absolute monarchs of nature, we were to purchase eternal bliss by the lightest of all trials. The disobedience of our first parents overthrew these merciful designs. It stripped us of all the privileges which had been granted to us gratuitously, and replaced us in the inferiority and wretchedness of our natural condition.

No doubt we have great right to deplore the fall which has so added to the burden of our trial; but we have not the right to see in trial itself an unmixed evil. On the contrary, the goodness of God has never shown itself with more magnificence than in this very excess of our wretchedness. He allows us to find therein a glorious compensation for the rela-

tive inferiority of our nature. For if it is true that the recompense of eternity is proportionate to the probation of time, how can we complain of the rigor of this probation? Have we really the right to murmur because we have been placed for a few days in the lowest rank of the family of the Heavenly Father, if we can hope to hold through all eternity in our Father's mansion a rank equal to that of our eldest brothers? *Thou hast made him a little lesser than the angels* (Psalm viii. 6). *In the resurrection they shall be as the angels of God in Heaven* (St. Matthew, xxii. 30).

It is true that the result of this special condition of humanity is that the number of its elect will be comparatively less than in the other species of intelligent beings. Among the angels, malice alone could add to the number of the reprobate. Among men, ignorance and weakness mingling with malice, in proportions which the eye of God alone can discern, join together to prevent the execution of the plans of the Creator and to turn aside a great number of souls from the way of salvation. It is, then, in the bosom of humanity that under the most unfavorable conditions the struggle of good against evil and of Satan against God shall take place. But it is just because of this that the definite triumph of good over evil, which shall crown this long struggle, will be infinitely more glorious to God than that which He has won in the angelic nature.

This explains to us the particular dispositions

taken by the Almighty to secure this triumph. It gives us the reason why the Son of God took our nature rather than that of the more perfect spirits. As a valiant general, He went forth to the heat of the strife. He would combat at the decisive post, there where the enemy waged the fight with the greatest fury and made use of every advantage.

But although He has come to our help and has placed ready to our hand the most powerful means of salvation, He has not wished to take from our infernal foe any of his resources. He has changed not one of the conditions of our destiny. On the contrary, He has only brought out these conditions into stronger relief. In the primary plan, the virtue of grace would have shone forth in the preservation of a corruptible nature. After sin, its virtue will better shine in the regeneration of a corrupted nature. Our probation will become more difficult; but also it will become more glorious, beyond all measure. *Where sin abounded grace shall more abound* (Romans, v. 20). God's wisdom shall draw from ignorance and weakness and lust—the sad fruits of sin which shall be transformed into sources of merit—a glory which pure spirits could not have given to Him.

This is the destiny of man inasmuch as it results from the primary plan of God, from the overthrow of this plan by sin, and from its restoration by the Divine Mercy.

This is the explanation of all the seeming contradictions met with in our nature.

Hence the contrast, so strange at first sight, between the immense price paid by Divine Mercy for man's salvation and the scantiness of the results. Hence the delay experienced in the propagation of truth : hence the eclipse of truth in the very midst of countries enlightened for centuries by its rays : hence the pitiful contrast between the life which the greater part of Christians lead and the Faith which they profess : hence the illusions and the weaknesses of the very Saints.

These are so many proofs, not of the insufficiency of God's grace, but of the immense, the remediless weakness of human nature. They are consequently like the shadows which, to the eyes of an enlightened understanding, only bring out the more strongly the glory of the triumph won by grace in the bosom of a nature so wretched.

We are not, then, to leave ourselves to be overcome by the weight of our weakness. Let us not complain too much of the numberless infirmities which, day by day, we discover in ourselves ; and of that tendency, so violent, which draws us down whenever we would fain rise to heaven. Oh, doubtless it is hard to be thus constantly at strife with self, to do each moment that which one would not and never to do that which one would. But let us remember that the humiliation which is the result of constant defeat, makes up a great part of our merit, and is consequently a very solid warrant of our final triumph. It was necessary that God's grace should

win this kind of triumph and that the Creator should receive from His creature this kind of witness. It was necessary in the harmony of creation that to the praise of strong and perfect creatures should be joined the praises of the weak and the imperfect. What right have we to complain of the part which has been given us, since we know that it contributes not less than that of the angels and the very seraphim to the universal harmony, to the glory of God and to our own eternal bliss.

On the contrary, has not man a just reason for blessing God, in that his very weakness renders his dangers far less great than those of the angels, whereas the crown set before him is not less than that of the pure spirits?

Let us lift up our eyes to Heaven. There shall we see in the person of Jesus Christ, in the person of Mary, in the person perhaps of many other saints, our nature lifted beyond measure above the angelic nature. In hell, on the contrary, we have every reason to believe that the torments of the wickedest of the damned are beyond measure less than those of Satan and his angels. And, moreover, do we not know that it is our boundless weakness which has been the reason, on God's part, for pouring forth mercy without measure, the results of which we can know only at the last day.

Let us then accept with joy the condition given us. Let us hold ourselves firm at the post assigned us, and think only of doing our best to fight the good

fight. Let us take ourselves as we are. Let us not demand for ourselves that which we could demand only if we were angels; and also let us be careful not to weigh down by our own fault the burden, already heavy enough, of our trial. How much lighter this burden would be were there not joined to the difficulties of our nature, difficulties immeasurably greater by reason of our resistance to the designs of God. Let there be an end to this senseless resistance. Let us understand the law of probation, and do our best to realize it. Then the terrible problem of evil will not be for us as for the unbeliever, an insoluble problem, and we shall be in a condition bravely to face its obscurity.

IV.

Evil as well as good must serve to glorify God.

Everyone knows that there are two kinds of evil: physical evil, which consists in pain or privation, and moral evil, which consists in sin, that is to say, in the disorder by which a free will prefers pleasure to duty and a passing good to infinite good.

I. That physical evil may serve to God's glory and man's happiness, we have already seen. This kind of evil is nothing else than the chief matter of our probation.

Accordingly, we have the right to refer back to this evil, as to their chief cause, the glorious results which spring, as we have seen, from probation—merit in this life and happiness in eternity. Physical evil is a bitter root, which bears fruits of incomparable sweetness. It is the passing weariness of the combat at whose price the soldier purchases the delights of victory. Man owes to it in great part the grand honor of being along with God the fashioner of his own destiny and of co-operating with Him in the greatest of the works of the Almighty, the work by which he himself becomes divine.

Physical evil is therefore an evil only in a very relative sense. If it is a real evil for the vine to be deprived by the husbandman's pruning knife of the luxuriant foliage which injures its fruitfulness; if it is an evil for the business man to neglect the cheaper merchandise that he may gain what is much more profitable; then, too, we may say that physical evil is a real evil for the free creature. But if these accidental evils are considered by all men as so much real good, even with regard to the interests of time, how can they be considered otherwise when compared to the interests of eternity?

These things are so evident that we cannot conceive how they could ever be seriously denied. Everyone sees that the fewer privations there are here to endure, the less trial there will be; and the less trial there is, the less merit there will be;

and, last of all, the less merit we can acquire in time, the less glory will await us in eternity.

We might even add to this that to destroy pain out of our life would be to destroy that which is the greatest charm of the eternal bliss prepared for us by God. For the chief charm of the bliss of a free creature is that he should freely have conquered, and consequently have had something to sacrifice to win it.

Last of all, the usefulness of physical evil appears from another order of considerations. We might ask ourselves what, if this evil did not exist, would become of the great virtues which at all times the human race has held in such high esteem—courage, fortitude, constancy, heroism? They would disappear, and with their disappearance they would deprive all other virtues of their most shining crown and all humanity of its chiefest glory. Hence we may conclude that among all the dogmas of our holy religion this dogma of the usefulness of pain is one most clearly according to the light of reason, one most honorable to our nature whose noblest energies it develops, and one most glorious for our liberty which by its showing is called to conquer even the possession of God. With all this, it is difficult to understand how this dogma should never have been so violently attacked as in this century, which pretends to be so jealous of the rights of liberty, of the prerogatives of nature, and of the lights of reason.

II. But though it is easy to prove the usefulness of physical evils, it is not so easy to understand how

moral evil can help to glorify God. This, indeed, is one of those enigmas which reason could never resolve had not faith come to its aid, and which still crush under their weight those who seek its solution outside of the teachings of Christian revelation. It is the great problem of the age. An eminent writer has had no trouble in showing that it is found at the bottom of all doctrines which, under the name of liberalism or socialism, have upturned society in our day.* But for the Christian this problem was long ago solved. Besides the solutions of fatalism and pantheism, God has wished to give His own, the divine solution. We have no need to say that it is the only one which satisfies the reason. Although we cannot yet present it in its sublime integrity, yet from the present point we may understand this much : that moral evil is not the work of God, but the result of man's revolt ; that God, when He made it possible, had in view only the happiness of His creature ; that when God permits it, He gives with it the occasion of gaining inestimable advantages ; that, last of all, when He punishes it, He constrains those who to the very end have scorned His mercies, to glorify throughout eternity His holiness and His justice.

Such are the principal heads of doctrine by which the Christian theology resolves the problem of evil. We shall have no need of treating them at great length to grasp their whole bearing and to

* Donoso Cortes, *Essay on Catholicism, Liberalism, and Socialism.*

scatter the darkness with which this painful problem weighs down our minds.

III. First of all, *moral evil is not the work of God*, but the fruit of man's revolt. This is a consequence of the very notion of this evil. For there is no moral evil, no sin, except where there is opposition between a created will and the moral law; and the moral law is nothing else than the will, free or necessary, of the Creator.

God, indeed, since He is Holiness itself and the absolute master of His creature in all that He wishes, is essentially just; and, consequently, there is no holiness and justice for the creature other than in the fulfilling of God's will. When, therefore, Calvin supposed that God predestined from all eternity certain men to do evil just as he predestined certain others to do good, he destroyed the very notion of good and evil, he justified every crime. He made the greatest criminals equal to the greatest saints, since the former like the latter equally accomplish, according to him, the designs of their Creator and the law of their creation. Reason with horror repels such blasphemies.

Reason proclaims that God has created all men for holiness and that He has given to all the means of becoming holy. Only those do evil who, to His offence and their own destruction, abuse the liberty which He has given them for His service and their salvation.

Let unbelievers, then, cease to set against the

goodness of God those men who, according to them, do evil only through ignorance of good. If such men exist, evil for them is no longer evil—at least, it is no longer a moral evil according to the true sense of this word. For true moral evil is simply the free act by which man knowingly turns away from his last end. It consequently supposes the knowledge of this end and the knowledge of the obligation of tending toward it. The man who should be absolutely ignorant of this, even though for everything else he should be in possession of his reason, would not in reality be a moral agent at all; and consequently he would be no more susceptible of merit or demerit than a child or an idiot.

Moral evil then always supposes the possibility that it may be avoided. Its gravity is in proportion to the degree of light which shines upon the understanding, and the degree of strength with which the will is endowed. By what right then can we make of its existence a weapon to attack the goodness of God?

It is, some one may say, because this abuse of liberty is possible only inasmuch as God has eternally foreseen it and freely permitted it. It depended only on God, if He so wished, to make evil impossible. Why then has He not prevented it? Why?

IV. *Because the possibility of evil is, in the present order of things, the condition of man's merit.*

In fact, man's merit, as we have shown, consists in preferring the service of God to all the advantages

he might find away from Him. But one of two things is necessary. Either it is possible for man to attach himself to present advantages, in despite of the rights and promises of God, or else this is impossible for him. If it is impossible to love created good in despite of God, to prefer pleasure to duty, there is no merit in preferring duty to pleasure, God to His creatures. What merit can there be in doing that which it is impossible not to do? If, then, we would preserve the merit, the glory, the very reality of this choice, it must be that the opposite choice is possible, and consequently that man is able to attach himself to the creature rather than to the Creator, to pleasure rather than to duty. Hence, it follows that for man in his present state the possibility of evil is the condition of the possibility of good, and that to pretend to oblige God to prevent the former is to force him to destroy the latter, to deprive Him of the greatest glory which He can obtain from His reasonable creature, and despoil the creature itself of its greatest merit.

V. Let us add to this that the *actual permission of evil is for man the source of inestimable advantages*, and furnishes him with matter for the most admirable of virtues.

Physical evils, so to speak, are the only soil favorable to the growth of the virtues which the world most esteems. But how many other virtues, fairer still and more admired of Heaven, find in moral evil the condition of their budding forth. Shall we

take it ill that the Divine Husbandman should make use of very rottenness, to bring forth the fairest flowers and the richest harvest? There is always courage, sometimes there is heroism, in the struggle against pain. But how much more courage, how much more heroism must there not be, to bear up under the persecution of injustice, jealousy, hatred, ingratitude? to drink, drop by drop, the poison of calumny? to remain alone faithful to the Most High amidst the general falling away? to behold unflinchingly the triumph of wickedness, and without murmuring to hear its cruel derision? Where does goodness show itself more generous, sweetness of character more heavenly, patience more admirable, and charity more divine, than when these virtues are practised, not alone against physical wretchedness, but in relation with moral depravity, when they redouble their kind attention in proportion as they meet with more repulsive harshness? Finally, how often does not it happen, that faults forced by passion on the weakness of the will become the occasion of wonderful repentance, of splendid reparation, of heroic devotedness. How many Saints in heaven owe to the faults they unhappily have committed and generously redeemed, the high degree of glory which they enjoy.

We ask, once for all, are not so many advantages motives enough for the Divine Wisdom to permit evil?

VI. But yet we cannot deny that the evil, which

God permitted only that it might become for its authors the source of greater good, may with obstinacy hold out against His mercy. Instead of giving place to repentance, it may lead to a hardening of heart which has no remedy. How shall God find His glory in resistance so obstinate? What means shall He take to bring into order that free will which identifies itself, in a way, with its own disorder? To this last question, there is, alas, but one answer.

He shall abandon those who abandon Him. He will permit disorder to bring forth its own fruit, and this is the everlasting wretchedness of those who have given themselves up to it. They have freely put away the Supreme Good, they have said to Him, "Begone from us!" it shall be done to them as they have willed; they shall have the greatest evil, and by the pain that this evil shall cause them to experience they shall everlastingly glorify Him whom they would not glorify by their happiness.

This shall be the last means of the All Powerful, but this means is unfailing. Truly it would be too strange that a creature could thwart its Creator, and that nothingness should be able to defeat the designs of the Infinite. *As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me and every tongue shall confess to God* (Romans, xiv. 11). We may glorify Him in two ways—by repentance and by chastisement. It is for us to choose, and it is to make this choice that liberty has been given to us.

But liberty cannot be stretched so far as to utterly frustrate the designs of our Creator Who has made us for His glory. The wise man says: *The Lord hath made all things for Himself; the wicked, also, for the evil day*, when he shall be constrained to serve as an instrument in the working out of the designs of his Creator (Proverbs, xvi. 4). If to the very end of his time of trial he has been able to refuse to glorify freely the Divine Goodness, he cannot deprive the Divine Justice of its glory from the just chastisement it shall inflict upon his faults.

In heaven he would have proclaimed the infinite loveliness of God by the very bliss which he would have tasted in the possession of God; in hell he shall proclaim it no less loudly by the pain and despair caused by the absence of God.

In reality, these are two witnesses, equally glorious for God. As the sun shows itself the source of light when in setting it leaves the earth in darkness no less than when in rising it floods the horizon with its light, so God shall be known as the Supreme Good when their loss renders supremely wretched those who by their fault are deprived of Him, not less than when He renders supremely happy those who have merited to possess Him.

Thus throughout eternity heaven and hell shall have but one voice, to confess God's goodness. In that wonderful harmony, which the ages shall say to the ages, the invisible world and the visible world alike, the reprobate by their cries of despair and the

elect by their hymns of joy, shall unite together in saying and repeating unceasingly that God is supremely holy, supremely wise, supremely just, and supremely good. Then all the outrages which the Most High has received here below and which have had no reparation by repentance shall be repaired by the forced expiation imposed upon their authors. Then all the movements which by the abuse of disordered liberty to-day oppose His designs, shall be brought back to their end, under the resistless impulse of His justice. The evil of eternal pain shall repair by its limitless duration the gravity, which in a way is infinite, of the evil of the fault.

We cannot deny that this teaching scatters a great part of the darkness which hinders our discovering, in the midst of the confusion round about us, the application of the great law according to which everything in the world must tend to glorify God. However, we are not yet in possession of all the data necessary for the complete solution of the problem set before us. By the help of the preceding explanations, we may without difficulty give account to ourselves of the individual destinies of men; but we cannot yet pass judgment on the collective destinies of the peoples and of all humanity.

We must, therefore, push our study yet further. The examination of the last article of this first law will perhaps allow us to shed some light on this point which remains obscure.

V.

The peoples are to glorify God in their collective and temporal existences.

Before developing the present article, the reader should be advised that we do not profess for it, at least under all its aspects, so absolute a certainty as for the truths which we previously laid down.

You will find in no decree of the Church under this abstract and universal form the proposition which we have made. So it is not an article of faith ; but it is not difficult to deduce it from a thousand passages of the Scriptures and the Holy Fathers, as well as from the most accredited authors of the Church. They seem to have not the slightest doubt in regard to it. On this law St. Augustine and with him Bossuet based their entire magnificent doctrine of the Christian philosophy of history. For this purpose, moreover, they had only to generalize the designs of God as revealed to us by the Prophets, and to extend to all people what the Holy Scripture teaches us concerning the people of Israel and those nations which were to be found in contact with it.

These different nations everywhere appear to us as moral persons, whom God recompenses or chastises because of what they have done collectively, just as he recompenses and punishes individuals for what they have done individually.

Beside all this, the principles we have previously

laid down seem to lead up irresistibly to this conclusion.

In reality, if we admit that all the happenings of this world have been ordered or permitted by God only with a view to His glory, we cannot deny that the most splendid and important among them all—those which belong, not to isolated agents, but to whole societies—are to attain the same end. Now the different societies which make up the human race have only a temporal existence. It is therefore in time that God is to draw His glory from the fidelity with which they work out His designs as well as from the resistance which they oppose to Him. The justice of this reasoning and the truth of this law will clearly result from the following considerations.

I. What is of first importance for us to understand is the reality of the fact which we state when we say that *a people has a collective existence*.

It is true that this fact is a conclusion of common sense, and yet a certain amount of reflection is necessary to grasp its bearing. Superficial minds often reason as if society were not a real thing, but a mere fiction of the mind. Doubtless, we do not pretend that society is anything distinct and independent from the different members which go to make it up, but what we do maintain, and what is true is that, when men unite together to work out their destiny in common, there is a result from this union which is something very real, which would not exist if they remained by

themselves,—a moral being which has its own destiny, its own origin, its progress, its decline and its death, a body all of whose members, quite apart from their personal merit or demerit, share in the merits or demerits of the whole society.

Thus, every man who lives in society has a double existence and exercises a double action. He has his individual existence and his individual action, for which he is alone responsible, alone worthy of praise or blame. Moreover, he has a share in the collective existence of the nation to which he belongs. He is attached to it by his ideas, his affections, his manners, his interests, and by every element of his physical and moral life. He also shares in its prosperity and its misfortunes, its glory and its ignominy. We are not giving ear to an idle prejudice but to the very instinct of our reasonable nature when we are proud of the great deeds of our fellow-citizens, when we identify ourselves with the successes and reverses of those who, hundreds of years since, dwelt in the land where we were born. It is not an idle prejudice which caused the tears of Jeremias to be shed over the smoking ruins of Jerusalem and left him no comfort but his groans, even when the conqueror showed himself full of kindness in his regard. He forgot his individual interest to think of the collective interests of that people which he looked upon as flesh of his flesh, and which he saw dragged away into captivity. He regarded himself as buried in that tomb where the glory of Israel lay dead.

No doubt this collective existence of a people is principally summed up in those who govern it. It is they who speak and act in the name of the whole society; and as they have a preponderating influence in the common work, they have also a heavier responsibility. Yet there is no private citizen who has not his share also of responsibility and his share of influence in the destinies of his people. Most of all in our modern societies, where opinion is so powerful, there can be no government so absolute that it is not constantly subjected to pressure from the thoughts and feelings of those governed. Entire nations are therefore really responsible for their collective acts. It is they who make war or peace, who violate justice or put their arms at the service of right, who defend or attack the Church of God.

II. A second fact we must not lose from sight if we wish to understand the ways of Divine Providence. This is that *the collective existence of a people is bound up within the limits of time*. This fact is yet more evident than the former. It is clear that in eternity there will be neither among the elect nor among the reprobate any of those boundaries which divide mankind into empires, kingdoms, and republics. These distinctions may be useful for the maintenance of order on earth, but they have only an earthly and temporary purpose.

Besides all this, experience sufficiently proves that the existence of the peoples is bounded by the limits

of time. In reality, we see them one after the other successively pass through phases which are not unlike those of the existence of the individual; along the creeping steps of childhood, in the fire of youth, through the period of manly prime, and then, sooner or later, in the decline of old age; last of all they disappear from the world's stage.

III. From the two facts we have just stated this conclusion cannot but be drawn, namely, that peoples as well as individuals *have their own collective duties*. From the fact that they have a collective action, they are obliged to conform their action to the eternal rules of justice, and to co-operate in the working out of those designs which the Creator has manifested to His creature.

There is no activity in the world which is not under rule. There is no power without duty. Even the Divine action, independent as it is by nature from everything distinct from God, finds in the very essence of the Supreme Being an immutable law from which it cannot wander. Its infinite power is bound by the glorious duty of willing only that which is good, and of referring everything to itself. It is this common term as well as Their common existence which binds together in ineffable society the Three Persons of the Divine Trinity. How, then, could human societies, which are nothing else than created images of this Divine Society, be without law and bound by no duty?

It is not the place here to say in what these du-

ties consist. The two laws of Providence which we are to expound will permit us to determine them more distinctly than we could at this moment. But the existence of these duties is already manifest. We cannot doubt that the glory of God is the end of societies, quite as it is the end of individual existences.*

How would it be possible for God not to be the end of societies, since He is evidently their beginning? Is it not He Who has placed in the hearts of men the resistless tendency to unite themselves with their fellows? Is it not He Who has disposed things so that they can be born, grow up, and have the benefit of preservation, only in the midst of society?

* The reader will have no difficulty in understanding that when we say, with all Christian philosophers, that God's glory is the end of societies just as it is the end of all things, we have no intention of denying that societies have their own special end, which is the security of the members that compose them and the defence of their rights. These two ends, far from being in contradiction, are in perfect harmony with each other. Light also has an end of its own, which is to enlighten. Does it for that reason cease to tend to God's glory? On the contrary, everyone must see that its special end is only the application of the common end of things to the special nature of light, so that it attains the former by working out the latter, and glorifies God by giving light. In the same way, society must at one and the same time attain its own end and the universal end of all things—it must glorify God by securing the rights of its members, and secure the rights of its members by glorifying God.

Society, then, is truly the result of God's will, and consequently it must of necessity tend to the essential aim of God's will, which is simply His glory.

IV. *The peoples are subjected to trials collectively.* It could not be otherwise, for trial is the special condition, the great duty of the present life. The peoples wish for glory, and this is right; for glory is for a people a guarantee of its peace and of all the moral and material blessings of which peace is the source. Let them seek, then, their glory, but let them not forget at what price glory must be purchased here below. The price of glory is trial, for trial is at once the fountain-head of strength, wherein public virtues as well as private virtues are steeped; it is the antidote which keeps the social body from corruption, the ordinary fruit of prosperity. It is the wholesome pressure which raises the moral level of a people, and calls forth the devotedness of heroes. Last of all, trial faithfully and generously endured, is the greatest glory which a nation or an individual can give to God. Why should it not be for God the most irresistible motive to glorify a people? Is it not an unchangeable rule of the Eternal Justice that creatures shall have so much the more glory as they shall give more glory to their Creator.

V. From all we have said, it follows that there must be for a people a *collective and temporal sanction* of their collective duties. According as a people

shall accomplish or violate its duty, according as it holds firm or yields under trial, God will owe it recompense or punishment.

Here we come to the darkest point of this whole discussion. The ways of Providence over the peoples of the earth are always mysterious, most of all when there is question of sanction. We regret that no Christian doctor, at least to our knowledge, has fully treated this interesting question. Here, as elsewhere in our work, we should have been happy to go forward with the support of an authority more imposing than our own; but in default of this support, we shall strive logically to deduce, by a resistless chain of reasoning, our conclusion from the principles which we have just laid down.

In truth, if there is a law which governs the collective actions of a people, that law should have a sanction. If societies have duties to fulfil as societies, independent of the individual duties of each one of their members, they ought also to expect recompense or chastisement as societies, independently of the recompenses or chastisements which God reserves in His eternity for each of the individual men who have observed His law. Whether there is question of societies or individuals, God's wisdom cannot suffer Him to impose precepts without furnishing them with a sanction which will impel men to observe them; and His justice forbids Him to let good actions pass without recompense, or bad actions without chastisement. But these recompenses which

Divine Justice owes to faithful societies, and the chastisements which He holds in reserve for unfaithful societies, are not to be meted out to them during eternity ; for societies, as societies, have no existence beyond the bounds of time. There is no denying, therefore, that this retribution must be made during the course of the centuries.

Manifestly, therefore, there is a double economy of Divine Providence: one which concerns individuals and has for its field all eternity ; the other which regards societies and which is carried out in time. There is a double judgment of Divine Justice: one for each man at the end of his probation, that is to say, at his death, when it shall be given to each one according to his works; the other for each nation, at the end of each period of its history.

These periods, in reality, are nothing else than the time during which the different tendencies of a society have had their complete development, reach their prime, and cease in order to give place to new tendencies. Now, it is evident that if God cannot wait to recompense the good tendencies of a society until the society has been deprived of its collective existence, he also cannot wait until its good tendencies have given place to evil tendencies. If, then, as we have shown, there is a temporal Providence in regard to a people, this Providence must exercise its judgments especially at the end of every great historic epoch ; and by these, precisely, the philosophical historian will divide, as into so many differ-

ent acts, the great drama of the history of humanity.

Yet, let us confess it : however clear the law may be, its application cannot be made without many a difficulty. Surely, nothing is more complicated than the problems which attach to the economy of Divine Providence toward the various peoples.

According to Holy Scripture, *Justice exalteth a people, but sin maketh nations miserable* (Proverbs, xiv. 34). This is clear, but what is not equally clear is the kind and measure of the chastisements by which it pleases God's justice to punish the different kinds of public iniquities ; and it is also not clear how to establish the exact balance between social virtues and crimes.

Moreover, in order to pass judgment on the destinies of a people, we must keep in mind not only their own special vocation as a people, but also consider their mission with regard to the other peoples which make up the great society of nations. To a guilty society, which of itself might merit nothing but chastisement, God may give strength and greatness because of some work which this society is called to perform. Thus, the artisan sharpens his tool, not for the tool's sake, but because of the work which he desires to execute with it, and the advantage he hopes from it.

Yet these different considerations, however circumspect they may make us in forming predictions for the future, cannot entirely hinder us from estimat-

ing by the light of eternal principles the results of facts which happen before our eyes. God's mercy has infinite resources, but His justice has also its inviolable rights. Certain human virtues, or even the accomplishment of certain divine precepts, may win for a people a temporal recompense. But if on their side iniquity finally prevails over justice, it is impossible on God's side that chastisement should not finally prevail over recompense. The mission confided by Providence to a people may be a reason for delaying the execution of the chastisement it has merited, but it cannot delay it forever. When the rebellious instrument has wrought the exterior work for which God had given it power, the Divine Workman will break it in His hands, and His vengeance will be so much the more striking as it has been delayed the longer.

There is no opposition to be found, therefore, between the special destiny of a people and its destiny in relation to its neighbors. The designs of God are full of unity and harmony. That which should make a people just, is precisely that which should make it strong; and it is in fulfilling its own vocation that it will have solid success in the execution of its mission toward the other nations. If it refuses to fulfil its own duty, Providence will so dispose events that the means given it for carrying out its mission will serve to chastise its own unfaithfulness; and in its very success it shall find the beginning of its fall.

CHAPTER II.

THE SECOND LAW OF PROVIDENCE: IT IS BY JESUS CHRIST THAT GOD WISHES TO BE GLORIFIED IN THE WORLD.

THIS law is nothing else than the application to history of the fundamental dogma of the Christian religion. St. Paul has expressed this dogma with perfect exactness when he says: *There is one God, and one Mediator of God and man, the man Christ Jesus* (1 Timothy, ii. 5), true man as well as true God.

This title of *Mediator* given to the Word made flesh admirably sums up all the designs of God on the human race. It makes us understand that through Him God wishes to communicate Himself to man, and that also through Him man is to be filled with the *fulness of God* (Ephesians, iii. 19). If religion is an intercourse of love between God and His creature, Jesus Christ in the present order is the only intermediary of this Divine intercourse; and, wondrous thing, He is not only its intermediary, He is likewise its object. For it is He Whom God gives unto us; it is through Him that God gives himself to us, and gives to us all things; and it is He also Whom we offer up to God, and by Whom we pay over abundantly all our debts. His activity has a double movement; it reaches unceasingly from God

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to us, and from us to God. On one side, He brings down God to our level; on the other, He puts us in a condition to raise ourselves up to God. While His teachings show us the divine truth, His interior light makes us capable of grasping the truth. While His divine countenance reflects on our weak gaze the features of the Divine Beauty, the instinct of His Spirit impels our hearts, all carnal as they are, to become like unto Him. In one word, as in Him God has become man, so in Him men are to become divine.

All the designs of God, all the dogmas and precepts of religion, all the duties and all the hopes of men, all the destinies of society, and all the laws of history, are included in this saying. To understand it, it is enough for us to apply to the God-Man the different articles of the law which obliges creatures in general and man in particular to glorify their Creator. We shall have no trouble in convincing ourselves that the Son of God, now that He has become the Son of man, inherits in every one of these relations all the rights of His Eternal Father.

I.

The glory of the Incarnate Word is, in the present order, the end of all creation.

I. The fundamental principle of all the legislation of Providence, as we have seen, is that all crea-

tures have essentially for their end to glorify God, by reproducing in a finite degree His infinite perfections. Being the Supreme Beauty, He cannot give to the works of His hands any other model than Himself. Being the Infinite Love, He cannot create reasonable wills otherwise than to be happy in the possession of His infinite Goodness. The First Principle of all things, He is of necessity their Last End. Now this inalienable right of the Creator the Word of God shares essentially with His Father, inasmuch as with Him He forms one only God. But it is impossible that the Word should not inherit this right under a new title, when He takes upon Himself a created nature and thus becomes the Head and Model of all creatures. As God, He was already their Last End; but as the Incarnate God, He becomes their End more immediately, easier for them to attain, and consequently harder for them to reject.

In the present order, therefore, all creatures will have for their end to glorify Jesus Christ; and their happiness as well as their perfection will of necessity have for its measure the degree of their resemblance with Jesus Christ and of their union with His Divine Heart.

This, which is evidently true of all creatures in general, is still more clearly true of that creature to which the Incarnate Word has made Himself nearest—that is, to man. How can we doubt that the God-Man is in an altogether special manner the end of man? By Him the Divine Perfection has been manifested

most completely. Is it not, then, by imitating Him that we shall be assured of imitating God more perfectly, and consequently of attaining the true end of our nature, which consists in glorifying God by the imitation of His infinite perfections ?

Since the Word of God has taken upon Himself our nature, there cannot any longer be for us any real perfection other than the imitation of this Divine Model. Jesus Christ, by the very fact that He is the Man-God, is also the perfect man, the typical man, the man by way of eminence. God, the Father, when He gave Him to the world, told us, in a sense far different from that in which Pilate said the words —“*Ecce Homo !*” “Behold the Man !” —“Behold the ideal which I have conceived from all eternity, and which I call upon all of you to realize, each in the measure of his strength.”

It is the essential law of every work to realize the ideal of the workman. If the work is inert and passive, it is the workman who will take upon himself this realization. He will not cast aside the chisel and pencil ; he will not cease to cut and polish and correct ; he will give himself and give his work no repose until he has borne witness to himself that the marble or the canvas reproduces the form, expression, movement and life of that ideal image which he contemplates in himself.

But man is an active work. He is a picture that is to paint itself and make perfect in itself, day by day, the resemblance of Him who is at once his

Model and his Author. How can he do this if the Divine Model remains shut up in His invisible existence, covering His majesty with a dazzling and impenetrable veil? How shall our eye of flesh penetrate into the inaccessible light of the Infinite Intelligence, and grasp there the Eternal Ideal after which we have been created?

God saw our powerlessness, and yet He could not resign Himself to leave us in that state of imperfection wherein our nature places us.

What, then, shall He do? He will Himself realize His ideal: He will make incarnate His own Word. He will clothe with a nature like unto ours that Son, Who is at once the express image of uncreated beauty and the supreme type of all created beauty. By His first creation He has made us to His image and likeness; by this new creation He shall Himself be made to our likeness, and He will shut up the incomprehensibility of His Divine Form under the narrow dimensions of our human form. *And God said: Let us make man to our image and likeness* (Genesis, i. 26). *Jesus Christ, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man, and in habit found as a man* (Philippians, ii. 6, 7).

After all this, He doubtless has the right to impose on us, without new importunity, the great duty which was already imposed on us by our creation, viz., to imitate Him in all things, to be perfect as

He is perfect, and to glorify Him by the visible reproduction of His Divine Attributes. This duty has nothing that is not easy about it, ever since the Divine Perfection has become visible to our eyes of flesh, since *we have heard.....we have looked upon and our hands have handled the Word of Life* (1 St. John, i. 1).

By conforming ourselves, then, to this Divine Mediator, we shall draw near to God. By imitating Him, we shall be like unto God. By glorifying Him, we shall glorify God. His glory, therefore, conjointly with the glory of God, His Father, is the end of all men.

II. It is not only inasmuch as He manifests to us the Divine perfection, that Jesus Christ is revealed to us as our end. It is also inasmuch as He includes in Himself the complement of our nature. In Him and in Him alone, the immense void of this nature, at once so rich and so poor, becomes filled. In Him alone, we find the accord of those strange contradictions which make man an impenetrable riddle. Without Jesus Christ, the spirit of man is in necessary opposition with his senses; the activity of the understanding diminishes the strength of the will; interest and duty are divided beyond reconciliation, and the passions naturally conspire against virtue; the pleasure of the present life seems incompatible with the happiness of the future life; and the advantage of the individual cannot be reconciled with that of society. Even the virtues struggle against virtues. Greatness

of soul will not come into alliance with humility; strength shuts out meekness; the sensitiveness of a loving heart soon tarnishes the sheen of its purity; the rashness of intelligence goes on at the cost of simplicity of faith. To sum up all in a single word, outside of Jesus Christ human nature cannot find that harmonious unity which should be at once its perfection and its happiness. In its place we see only division, rending asunder, strife, weakness, disquiet, despair.

In Jesus Christ, on the contrary, and in all them who take Him seriously as their Model, all strife is appeased, all contradictions cease, all oppositions are reconciled. Look upon the face of this Divine Saviour, and then lower your gaze to the Saints who, as so many living mirrors, reflect His blessed features. See if, in the serenity of their brows, in the shining of their eyes, in the sweetness of their lips, every sentiment which makes up the greatness of the human soul is not revealed to you in its fairest fulness. A divine influence has passed over them, completing man by uniting together those things which nature seemed to have condemned to an antagonism beyond reconciliation.

The spiritualized senses have become the docile instruments of reason. The passions, brought back to their true objects, aid virtue in attaining true riches, true grandeur, true enjoyment: they cease to be the principles of all crimes, to become the sources of merit and holiness. The understanding finds in

Sovereign Truth the Sovereign Good, and by its own development favors the development of the will. The assurance of eternally possessing this one object of all the aspirations of the soul, and of enjoying it in proportion to the sacrifices we have made for it in time, indissolubly unites interest to duty, and no longer suffers us to separate the happiness of the present life from that of the future life, the advantage of the individual from the advantage of society.

The Heart of Jesus Christ then is the living solution of all the enigmas which, without Him, had been insoluble. It is the divine unity of the human heart which, outside of Him, is divided into many pieces. In Him and through Him humility, which turns man from seeking grandeur in nothingness and causes him to find it in God, joins itself with his loftiest aspirations; in Him strength tranquilly leans upon God, and, having no longer need of violent effort to sustain itself, is united to the most attractive sweetness. In Him the most affectionate heart finds a delightful object for its sensibility, dispensing it from chasing after shameful pleasure, and it becomes so much the more capable of loving whatever is lovable as it acquires greater empire over its animal appetites. In Him, last of all, the ardent love of truth makes the understanding so much the bolder and more confident in research of it, as it is humbler and more teachable in accepting it when truth gives itself forth by the channel of faith.

This is man, such as Jesus Christ has made him.

Behold him in his unity, in his perfection, and in his serene and unchanging peace! Before Jesus Christ man was an edifice in ruins, whose stones, skilfully polished but violently separated one from the other, seemed unable ever to be joined together. The plan even of this edifice was lost, and the architects who tried to reconstruct it succeeded only in mutilating it. Jesus Christ came, and He has shown us in Himself the divine edifice reconstructed with a splendor such as it never had before. Henceforward it depends only on ourselves to find in Him that unity which we would seek vainly outside of Him.

III. Jesus Christ in reality is not only the perfection of humanity in general, He is also the perfection of each man in particular.

When we come into the world, we are all strangely incomplete. Nature contents herself with giving the rude outline, to leave to our free activity the merit of perfecting ourselves. Accordingly, in the natural disposition of each man there are gaps and corners, qualities and defects. To develop the qualities and to correct the defects, to smooth down the corners and fill up the gaps, this is the work of the present life. But to accomplish this work we have need of a rule. Unless a model is given us, we shall be in great danger of taking for virtue that which is defect and of exaggerating monstrously those points which we should have rubbed away. Seek where you will such a model, practicable for every mind and any courage, greater than the great-

est, yet not beyond the reach of the lowest, a model which shall reveal all perfection to all and, while it reveals, shall make perfection amiable—and you shall not find it outside of Jesus Christ. But in Jesus Christ you will find it, and if you are sincere you will demand no other proof of the divinity of this adorable Saviour. Yes, He is your Model! Would you know what is wanting to you and what you have in excess? Measure yourself on the model of Jesus Christ. Would you find the unity of your being, which is now scattered in a thousand ways? Compare each part of it with the corresponding being of Jesus Christ, and you shall find the place of each faculty, the direction to give to each movement. You shall find order, and with order perfection, peace, true happiness.

IV. The conclusion of all that we have said is that for man Jesus Christ is the principle of a progress truly without limit.

It is evident that the first condition of serious progress is to put an end to the inward strife which stops us in our way, impedes us, and degrades us. But the moment that peace has been established within us, the moment that our powers are closely united in the pursuit of our true perfection, what then shall stay our progress? What power on earth or in hell shall be able to put a limit to it? Is not the goal of this progress the very Infinite, the Infinite Truth to know, and the Infinite Good to love, to imitate and to reproduce? Now, so long as we are

on this earth, where God has placed us only that we may grow unceasingly, shall we not be able always to find in this exhaustless mine new riches to gain? Our destiny is really and truly to become like unto Jesus Christ in our understanding, in our will, in all the powers of our soul, in the very senses of our body, in our relations with our fellows and with nature. To work out this destiny we have the all-powerful grace of Jesus Christ. What, then, is the progress, intellectual, moral, social, artistic—industrial, even, and material—which the faithful working out of this glorious destiny does not render easy?

On the other hand, without Jesus Christ is it not easy to see that every kind of progress is so much the more difficult as it is more important and more according to the divine dignity of our nature? Moral progress is more difficult than scientific progress, scientific progress than progress in the arts, progress in the arts than industrial progress. And not only the elements of human progress go on decreasing in proportion to their elevation in dignity, but they contradict and destroy each other mutually. Material progress, which is the least noble of all, unfailingly draws after it moral decadence. Man loses on the side of the spirit in proportion as he gains on the side of physical nature. And the enemies of Jesus Christ are themselves forced to deplore this degradation, of which their hostility against the Man-God is the principal cause.

When we leave this Divine Mediator, every con-

dition of progress slips from us. We are no longer in agreement as to the end whither we ought to tend, nor the way which we should follow. In constructing theories of progress, we lose that time of life which should be employed in realizing it. We dispute over vain speculations instead of helping each other by fruitful activity, and we go so much the further away from true progress as we have its name the more continually on our lips. Blind that we are, we obstinately seek in the region of chimeras what God eighteen centuries ago sent down to us from heaven.

We must indeed confess it : in the midst of all the objects of displeasure which poor humanity presents to us, there is nothing fitter to cause repugnance in an upright and generous soul than the shameless folly of the men who make war on Jesus Christ in the name of human nature and of progress. What ! Defend the rights of human progress against Him Who said to men, *Be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect !* against Him Who has promised to make us masters of ourselves, of the world and of nature, and Who has so gloriously accomplished His promise in the person of all those who were willing to take it seriously ! against the Man-God Who, as He ascended to eternal glory by the way of the most heroic virtue, invited us to walk in His steps and assured us all that when we should conquer, as He did, He would make us to sit upon His throne ! defend the dignity of human nature against Him in Whom it has been really and eternally made divine !

And what is it, then, which they offer to human nature—these men who make themselves its protectors? What do they offer it in recompense of the Divine destiny of which they deprive it? What do they offer it in exchange for that blessed unity which it has found in Jesus Christ? Ah, we know but too well. It is not difficult for us to measure the conquests of these powerful geniuses, and to weigh what they have added to the ignoble inheritance of reveries, doubts, contradictions, ignominies, which had been bequeathed to them by paganism. There is a certain industrial progress, which is by no means the fruit of their theories, but which their theories can only render disastrous. Apart from this, everything is pure paganism—paganism with its contradictory systems for the use of philosophers, and its gross materialism for the use of the masses. This is the goal set before us by our modern criers of progress. They pretend to make us advance by sending us back nineteen centuries. They propose to free us from the slavery of faith by bringing us down from the sunlight of certainty into the darkness of doubt, and from the serene regions of spirit into the mire of material interests.

For more than one hundred years society has listened to them and sacrificed to them all which during eighteen centuries had made its force, its union, its happiness. No, let us repeat, there is on this earth no more distasteful spectacle. Vice itself, in its most brutal fury, is not more revolting than this

set purpose to tear from humanity all its glories, and to stay the pouring forth of the Divine goodness, which without this criminal resistance would long since have flooded the earth.

II.

In the present order, the making divine of man is to be wrought out by Jesus Christ.

I. We have been studying one of the principal aspects of the mediatorship of Jesus Christ. We have seen how He inherits, by the union of His human nature with the person of the Eternal Word, the title of Last End, which is the essential attribute of God.

We must now push further still the study of our relations with this Divine Mediator. We have been forced to apply to Him the fundamental principle of our first law of Providence, which obliges all creatures, but most of all beings endowed with reason, to glorify God by imitating His infinite perfection. Can we as well apply to Him the second article of this same law, according to which the glorification of God in the present order is to result from the making divine of man?

Yes, assuredly we can do so; for Jesus Christ not only possesses the perfection of our nature, He also possesses the fulness of the Divinity, and He

possesses it only in order that He may communicate it to us. When God became man, He intended not only to make man complete; most of all He had it in view to make man divine. He is truly for humanity the type of all perfection—the goal of all true progress. But He is more than that. He lifts us up to a perfection infinitely above the powers and demands of our natural condition. He is the model and the supreme mover of the world of matter and the world of spirits; but, more than all this, He is the beginning and the end of the supernatural order. By the very act by which He took upon Himself our wretched nature, He communicates to it His divine life. He is not only the Model Man, but He is also the Head of humanity become divine.

In truth, when the Word of God became incarnate, He designed not to limit the communication of His Divinity to one single body and one single soul. The counsels of His love had a far wider scope. They embraced the whole world. It was human nature, whole and entire, and with it the angelic nature which He desired to unite with the Divine Nature.

Just as man composed of mind and body is the living bond between the spiritual and material creation, so the Incarnate Word, ineffably compounded of body and soul and a Divine Person, shall henceforth be the bond and living link between created and uncreated existence. And yet more, He shall be the head and heart whence the divine life

shall be poured forth on every order of reasonable creatures.

It is true there will be but one single individual nature which, by its union with the Son of God, shall be without a created personality and subsist in a divine personality, and which consequently can be called God. But all other individual natures belonging to the race of Adam shall be called to unite themselves to this privileged nature, and to receive by this union a very real communication of its divine life. There shall be but one only Man-God ; but all men who shall be willing to accept the influence of the Man-God shall be enabled to become divine men, to perform in Him divine acts, and through Him to attain to divine bliss. There shall be one only Son of Adam who can glory in being the only and the natural Son of the Heavenly Father ; but all those who shall be willing to receive this only Son shall become thereby the adopted sons of His Father and shall acquire a strict right to share in His heavenly inheritance. *As many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God* (St. John, i. 12). *If sons, heirs also ; heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ* (Romans, viii. 17).

II. The better to understand this close relation which unites Jesus Christ with the reasonable creation and makes of Him the Head of angels and of men, we must remember that the human nature of our Divine Saviour is united to the divinity by a double bond. It is, first of all, united by the hypo-

static union to the Person of the Eternal Word, which communicates to it its subsistence. But it is moreover united to the Person of the Holy Spirit by that union whose nature and effects we have already described, and this union is realized in Jesus Christ to a degree which no creature, angelic or human, has ever approached.*

In virtue of the first of these unions, Jesus Christ—man—is truly God, and the actions of His humanity are consequently the actions of God. These actions properly belong to the Eternal Word of God, and they receive from Him an infinite value. But, in virtue of the union of the holy soul of our Saviour with the Divine Spirit through sanctifying grace, the actions of this holy soul are divine by a new title. How would it be possible to doubt that the Holy Ghost shows forth in Jesus Christ, in its fullest measure, that virtue which is His for sanctifying and making divine the created faculties to which He unites Himself? Fire can penetrate with its heat and light the densest metal; and with what dazzling splendor, with what enkindling heat, shall not the Spirit fill that intelligence and that will to which the Word of God, by uniting Himself to them, has already given an infinite dignity? St. John the Evangelist

* It is hardly necessary to repeat here what we have already said in a former note—that we profess to attribute to the Holy Spirit, in that union whose bond is sanctifying grace, no other share than that which is assigned Him by the Holy Scripture and all Catholic Doctors.

thus describes to us in sublime words the prerogatives of the Word made flesh: *We saw His glory*, he says. What was this glory? *The glory as it were of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth* (St. John, i. 14). Before him St. John the Baptist had not only declared, but proved by the clearest of reasoning how necessary is this connection between the two unions of which we speak. He said to his disciples: *He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God; for God doth not give the Spirit by measure. The Father loveth the Son, and He hath given all things into His hand* (St. John, iii. 34, 35). It is as if he said—When God the Father unites the person of His Son with a human nature, He cannot restrain Himself from giving to this privileged nature all that belongs to Himself, and consequently His Spirit which is the first of His gifts.

In the same way therefore, as we cannot call in doubt the reality of the personal union of the Word of God with the human nature of Jesus Christ, so we cannot hesitate to acknowledge the reality of this other union, which is not now personal, but substantial—the union which sanctifying grace establishes between the holy soul of our Saviour and the Divine Spirit.

Now, of these two unions, there is one which Jesus Christ possesses as His own and which he communicates to none. It is the former—that by which He is God. The second is this union with the Holy Spirit, which would suffice, as we have seen, to make

His works divine works. This He not only consents to communicate to us, but He makes it a strict duty for us to receive the communication of it, and His Incarnation has no other end or aim.

In Him, then, the Holy Ghost has been poured out *without measure*; but from Him the Holy Ghost is to be poured forth on all men, just as the blood is sent forth from the heart into all the members. *Because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts* (Galatians, iv. 6). In His quality as only Son of the Father, He possesses the *fulness of grace*; but we, as His adoptive sons, are *to receive of His fulness* (St. John, i. 14, 16). He alone knows God by His own light; but through Him we are called to know God, even as He knows Him. *No man hath seen God at any time. The Only Begotten Son Who is in the Bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him* (St. John, i. 18). He alone has the right to call God by the name of Father; but we, when we receive His Spirit, learn to call God by the same name, and we gain the right of being heard, even as He is heard. *For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself asketh for us, with unutterable groanings, and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what the Spirit desireth, because He asketh for the saints according to God* (Romans, viii. 26-7).

III. Jesus Christ is, therefore, in a very real sense,

the Head of humanity and of the whole spiritual creation : for from Him alone does the Divine life pour itself forth on angels and men, as really as animal life spreads from the head into every part of our body. From Him and from Him alone proceed all supernatural acts which are done in heaven and earth. We cannot acquire the least merit, do the least action, conceive the least thought, pronounce the least word, in the supernatural order, if these different movements are not in our hearts through an impulse of His Divine Heart. This Adorable Heart is for all humanity, in the order of grace, what the sun, in the physical order, is for the earth and the other planets which gravitate around it. The sun of itself has neither light nor heat, but it is the centre where light and heat are gathered in their fulness, and whence they are poured forth with exhaustless fecundity. Thus the Heart of Jesus is not grace, but it is the centre and exhaustless fountain-head of grace. Light and heat existed before the sun, but once the sun was created they were centred in it as the waters are centred in the immense ocean bed, and henceforth they fecundate only those lands which the sun visits with his rays. In the same way, grace existed in the world before Jesus Christ ; but since Jesus Christ is born, He has become its only channel, and no souls are made fruitful of salvation except those who are submitted to His divine influence. Even before His birth He was the end and the meritorious

cause of the supernatural order ; since His coming He is moreover its Head and supreme Moderator.

Really, then, by Him and by Him alone can we work out our glorious destiny. In Him alone can we become divine by merit on earth, as in Him alone can we become divine in heaven by sovereign bliss ; and all the glory that God draws from this two-fold making divine of his reasonable creatures he shares with the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ.

This second aspect of the mission of the Divine Mediator lights up and wonderfully completes the first. We understand far better how Jesus Christ, with God His Father, is the end of humanity, when we consider Him as the Head whence the divine life is spread abroad throughout this great body. This divine life which He communicates to us has not only a distant resemblance to God, but it is a real participation in His nature ; it gives a splendor greater beyond compare to the glory of the Father, whence it flows, and of the Son, by Whom it is communicated to us, than any natural perfection even though raised to its highest degree.

On the other hand, our nature finds in its union with this Divine Head the superabundant satisfaction of all its needs and the infinite realization of its most daring dreams. Man naturally thirsts for the Infinite, and what has he not done to satisfy this thirst ? His whole existence has been from the beginning, as St. Paul expresses it, one series of efforts to attain to the Infinite, which by its spirituality was always escaping

from his grasp, though always present by its immensity. *He hath made of one all mankind to dwell upon the whole face of the earth.....that they should seek God, if happily they may feel after Him or find Him, although He be not far from every one of us* (Acts xvii. 26, 27). Therefore man could appease the sublime impulse within him only by absurd idolatries or the dreams of pantheism. By idolatry he strove to make God human, but he succeeded only in stripping Him of His divinity. By pantheism on the contrary he believed that he could make man divine, but he reached his end only by annihilating humanity. On either side, his efforts to unite the infinite and the finite were equally sterile, and served only to establish at once the height of his own vocation and the depth of his fall. But these resistless tendencies toward the Infinite which without Jesus Christ ended only in absurdity and crime, Jesus Christ has shown realized in His own Person, in regard to our common nature; and He puts each man in condition to realize them in himself. In Jesus Christ God being substantially united to our nature by the Incarnation, gives Himself, all and entire, to each man by His grace and offers to make all blessed with Him in glory.

It is really in glory that the Incarnate Word fully accomplishes His task as Head of regenerate humanity. This mission of His shall be consummated only when all the elements destined to form a part of this body, having passed through the trials of time, shall be united with their Head in their true

country. Then from Head to members life shall flow without hindrance and without other measure than the degree of their union with Him. Then He shall communicate to them the light of the Word which is His own, and by it He shall make them capable of seeing, as He sees, the Divine Essence. Then, too, He shall communicate to them the Spirit of God Which belongs equally to Him, inasmuch as he produces It conjointly with His Father. By this Spirit He shall make them able to love God as He loves Him, and consequently to taste as He tastes the bliss of God. It is then that God shall be all in all, for in that society of the elect there shall be but one only object, the Essence of God ; one only light, the Word of God ; one only spirit, the Spirit of God ; one only body, the Body of God.

IV. While waiting for this blessed and ineffable *communion* of eternity, our Divine Head has established for us on earth a complete apparatus of means designed to bring closer and closer the bonds which unite Him with His members. These wonderful processes of making divine, by which Jesus Christ communicates Himself to each man even as He communicated Himself by His Incarnation to all humanity, are the *Sacraments*. Between the Incarnation and the Sacraments there is perfect correspondence. As by the former the Divinity united Itself with a corporeal nature in order that it might be visible to men and become the bond of a visible society among them, so by the Sacraments invisible and supernatural

grace is united to a material sign ; and in this way it can be visibly transmitted from one member to another of the human society. Already, in the natural order, the world of bodies had for its plain mission to symbolize and aid the operations of spirits ; the corporeal light is at once the image and the aid of the natural light of reason. The Sacraments transfer this wondrous analogy to the supernatural order. They are at once a sign and a cause ; they express the wonderful effects of grace on souls, and they aid in the production of these effects. The water of baptism is the image and the instrument of the purification of souls ; the holy oil with which the young Christian's forehead and the hands of the future priest as well as the limbs of the dying faithful are anointed, is the mark and the channel of the strength with which their soul is clothed in order to fight the battle of God. Thus the Christian, who by his baptism has been grafted upon the Divine Tree, more and more becomes filled with its life.

But the great process of making divine, the Sacrament by way of eminence, the perfect extension of the Incarnation to each man, is the Holy Eucharist. Through it our Divine Head not only pours forth His influence upon His members, He *communicates* with them. That is to say, He unites himself whole and entire to them and unites them whole and entirely to Him. He does this with a perfection greater beyond compare than the first head of humanity could have done for his descendants. The flesh of

Adam, had he remained in holiness, would have been the channel of grace, so that he would have communicated the supernatural life to us by the same act by which he communicated to us our natural life. Jesus Christ, the Head of regenerate humanity, does this and much more than this. He too makes of His divine flesh the channel of the Spirit. But whereas the flesh of Adam would have been for his descendants only an occasion of grace, the adorable flesh of Jesus Christ effectively causes grace. Whereas Adam possessed grace only in measure, Jesus Christ possesses it in its fulness and can bestow it on each one according to the extent of his needs. Last of all, whereas Adam would have given us his life but once, Jesus Christ gives His life unto us as often as it pleases us to ask it of Him. What harmony is there in this mystery, what light bursts forth from its adorable obscurity! If someone accused us of taking too literally what Scripture and tradition teach us concerning man's becoming divine, to refute this accusation we should only need to point to the Divine Eucharist. No one will deny that there at least the Divinity gives Himself to us very really and very substantially. But if the end and aim of the supernatural order was not the very real becoming divine of man, if this order tended only to the production of a purely created quality, could we conceive that God would have chosen as the means to such an end this daily renewed gift of His own Son? Would it not cast a doubt on

His wisdom to suppose Him capable of thus throwing out the pure gold of His divinity only to obtain a result of infinitely less value ?

On the contrary let us take seriously this participation in His nature which God presents to us as the end of the supernatural order. Henceforth this order will appear to us in its enchanting harmony. We shall understand the Incarnation by which the Divinity has communicated itself fully to a nature sprung from Adam, through that nature to pour itself forth on all humanity. We shall understand the Sacraments, the visible channels through which invisible grace is conferred on beings who are themselves composed of a visible body and an invisible spirit. We shall especially understand the Eucharist, bringing to each man that grace which through the Incarnation was brought down to all humanity. The Eucharist is the Divine food which is destined unceasingly to restore a nature whose native weakness causes it unceasingly to faint and fail, and to renew, by virtue of a flesh that makes alive, the strength of a soul whose union with a corrupt body would not fail to deaden. In this communion Jesus Christ, without division, gives himself whole and entire to all those who receive Him. Thus He unites all together in the unity of His own being to make of them but one and the same body, even as His Holy Spirit Who is present in all makes of all but one single spirit. In this we may contemplate with en-

raptured minds the image and the beginning of the blissful communion of eternity.*

III.

The glory of God, of Jesus Christ, and of man himself, in the present order, is to result from the imitation of the sufferings of the Man-God.

If the Divine Mediator inherits all the rights of God His Father toward us, it must be that His glory, like that of God His Father, should be the outcome of our trials; and that the third article of the first law of Providence should be reproduced in that law which obliges us to give Him all that we owe to God.

* To grasp in all its sublimity the Providential plan of the making divine of man by the Man-God, it would be necessary to read the commentaries on St. John by St. Cyril of Alexandria and his different treatises against the Nestorians and the Macedonians. Petavius has justly remarked that this great Doctor seems to have received from God the special mission of bringing out in its full light that double union which it has pleased the Divinity to enter upon with our nature—the union of the Word with the humanity of Jesus Christ and the union of the Holy Ghost with the souls of Christians. We will refer to but a single passage where he sums up with perfect clearness this wonderful doctrine. He is commenting on these words of the prayer of our Lord after the Supper. *“Not for them only do I pray but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me, that they all may be one, as Thou Father in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us”* (St. John, xvii. 21).

Henceforth His mission will appear to us in a quite different light. We have seen Him in His grandeur, we shall now see Him in His abasement. Wonderful thing! From the very midst of this abasement we shall see springing forth a glory more touching than all the splendor of His power. Yes, the most consoling side of the work of our Divine Saviour is that He has willed to take upon Himself all that which in our trials was bitterest and most humiliating.

After becoming our Head and our Life, He has willed to become our Guide and our Way. It was not enough for Him to furnish us in His grace the means of becoming divine. He has wished, moreover, to show us by His example how we are to use this means. It would be little that He should make us like to Him by communicating to us His fulness, had He not likened Himself to us by taking upon Himself our need. His love demanded this complete likeness. The Heart of Jesus has never been able to resist the demands of love.

In truth, where can we find the law of trial more completely realized than in the person of Jesus Christ? His entire life from Bethlehem to Calvary was but one uninterrupted trial, crowned by the supreme trial of all in His most cruel death. Every advantage, every glory, every joy which was due Him by right of birth He freely renounced through love of us, that we might learn to sacrifice for love of God advantages and glories and earthly joys which might

tend to draw us away from Him. Every privation, every weakness, every sorrow, He has freely undergone in order to teach us, not only not to fear them, but to embrace them and love them and long for them.

Let us stop to admire the means which was the invention of His love in order that our trials might cease to frighten us and might seem lovable to us.

Is it not true that all which He took upon Himself became divine and acquired the power of making divine? His humanity whole and entire and each of its parts, His soul and His body, are all divine by their union with Divinity and make divine all that they touch. If then He takes upon Himself our trials, they too shall become divine; and they shall acquire the virtue of making us divine.

Therefore He shall take them to Himself, He shall make of them His inseparable companions. They shall clothe Him roundabout as with a mantle, they shall be his daily bread. He shall taste all their bitterness, and the Prophet shall be able to sum up in two words His entire existence, calling Him *the Man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity* (Isaias, liii. 3).

Henceforward in the language of regenerate humanity trial shall change its name. It shall be called the *Cross*, a divine name which makes it clear and lightsome, so that through the darkness of its greatest desolation we must needs see a God Who bears it with us, Who uses it as a bond of our union

with Himself, and prepares for it an eternal recompense in Heaven.

The Cross—this is the word which henceforward shall express all the designs of God on man, a pilgrim in this land of exile. It is the word which shall contain the secret of his eternal destiny. In the Cross of Jesus Christ the soul thirsting for happiness shall find, with the free accepting of every ill, the beginning of every good.

In the Cross is comprised every privation, and yet it shall come to pass that the servants of the Cross shall be the richest of men. The Cross, while it disengages man from all things, shall leave him wanting in naught.

The Cross comprises every pain, and yet in the shadow of the Cross there shall be born a generation of heroic men who shall at once be the most joyous of all men and who shall taste with so much the greater pleasure the true delights of the heart, the more they shall have abhorred the mean enjoyments of the flesh. *And they indeed went from the presence of the council rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus* (Acts v. 41).

The Cross comprises every ignominy, and it condemns its followers to be the laughing-stock of the world. And yet there shall be found men despised of the world during their life who, after their death, shall be the object of a worship such as humanity never gave to its heroes and demigods.

Such is the glory which Jesus Christ has attached

to our trials, and this glory whole and entire returns to its Author. The Saints indeed triumph by the Cross of Jesus Christ; but to Jesus Christ far more than to the Saints the honor of this triumph redounds. Contest if you will the miracles which the Man-God wrought during His mortal life; close your eyes to the most dazzling light of history, deny that by the words of His mouth and the touch of His hands He gave sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, motion to the palsied and life to the dead: but what you cannot deny is that daily, through the virtue of His Cross and the contact of His love, He works a miracle not less astounding by making men to love all that nature most abhors, by making them find in the most utter privation their hearts' full content, by crushing souls under trial and making them whole again, consuming them in the crucible of affliction to make them find once more that freshness of life which the withering breath of pleasure had dried up, by forming through abnegation and annihilation of self the only race of complete men which has yet appeared on earth.

Of old a sect of philosophers tried to make man insensible to suffering, but only succeeded in making him proud and lying. He who cried when he was a prey to the tortures of the gout—"Oh, pain, thou shalt not force me to acknowledge that thou art an evil!"—did not make his pain less keen because he refused to call it by this name. All that he gained from his philosophy was to put himself in contradic-

tion with common sense. Jesus Christ acted quite otherwise toward pain and grief. He left it its name ; He does not hinder us from recognizing it as an evil. But this evil He makes the price of the greatest good, the condition of our likeness to Him, the bond which unites our heart with His Heart, the highway of glory, the sovereign process of becoming divine. Henceforth pain and grief become, not indeed indifferent—they could not be that—but lovable and supremely to be desired. And the world shall see not a sect of philosophers but an entire society of men of every condition and every age adoring suffering symbolized by the Cross, embracing it with tenderness as did St. Andrew, the Saviour's disciple ; men who truly love the Cross, who quit all to take it up, mounting up on it as on their chariot of victory, intoning their hymn of triumph, up to the moment when they yield their last breath to the crucified God.

IV.

The sins of men serve to glorify Jesus Christ.

The glory of God springs not only from trial and from physical evil, it is also derived from moral evil—from sin. It is the same with the glory of Jesus

Christ. It is a new application of the law by which God associates Jesus Christ with Himself in all His rights toward creatures.

There is perhaps no aspect of the mission of our Divine Mediator which brings out more shiningly the wisdom, goodness, justice, holiness, in a word, all of the attributes of God. Therefore the name of Saviour, which precisely declares this side of His mission, has become His proper name. In truth the Mediator between the guilty one and his Judge ought most of all to apply Himself to this, namely, to bring about a forgetfulness of the crime which exposes the former to the chastisement of the latter. Our Mediator would have had a great mission to fulfil, even if we had not sinned, there is no doubt of this; but after our sin His mission is summed up in the expiation and reparation of this fault. All His efforts then shall be directed toward this end. We must not doubt that He will show forth in pursuing His aim all His power and resourcefulness. This is His masterpiece—it must at any price be worthy of His hand.

Evil, as we have seen, may serve God's glory in two ways: either by the free repentance of the sinner to whom it is pardoned, or by the chastisement of the criminal who refuses to receive his pardon. In the first case it is the mercy of God that triumphs over sin, in the second it is His justice. These two triumphs are both glorious to the Almighty.

Reason understands this without difficulty. But

what reason could never have found of itself, what the most perfect intelligence could never have suspected, is the means of making to triumph at one and the same time in the reparation of the same fault both mercy and justice ; to inflict on this fault a punishment severer beyond compare than the eternal torments of the guilty, and at the same time to pardon it with a goodness immeasurably more generous than if it had been forgotten as soon as committed ; to set up between the expiation and the offence that perfect balance which immutable justice vainly pursues through the centuries without end of an unhappy eternity, and yet to make by descending to the level of an infinite evil the chastisement available to the guilty one for an infinite dignity and bliss.

Is it not true that if this problem had been set before the greatest genius and the most enlightened intelligence of the angels apart from the Incarnation, it could not have been considered otherwise than as a plain absurdity and an absolute impossibility. Yet this impossibility became a fact, and each time that we pronounce the name of Jesus we make an act of faith in the realization of this apparent contradiction. This wonderful design has become so simple a thing for us that it has ceased to strike us. The greatest of all miracles no longer appears to us other than the most natural of all events. Perhaps if we consider it more nearly we shall learn to admire it more.

I. Nothing is clearer than that God's justice has

been satisfied superabundantly by the death of His Son. For in what did the disorder of sin consist? In the fact that man, a being of nothing, had dared to revolt against his Creator and to deny to Him in the face of creation His inalienable title of last end. He owed Him obedience; this obedience was refused. Instead of praise he had given insult, and instead of love indifference: to the Infinite Good he had preferred a passing pleasure. It is plain that the gravity of an insult is measured by the dignity of the person offended, and the value of the reparation is proportioned to the worth of him who makes it. Man is nothing, and when he has offended his God, can never worthily repair the offence. It should seem that God's justice must renounce the obtaining of full satisfaction. To give it to Him it would be necessary to unite together two qualities which exclude each other: passibility which allows of suffering, and infinity which gives to suffering sufficient worth. Yet we see these irreconcilable extremes brought together by the Incarnate Word, in the unity of His Person. As man He can suffer, and as God He gives to the least sufferings of His humanity an infinite price. Sin thus finds superabundant reparation. The majesty of law had been violated by the free disobedience of a man of clay, but with what splendor has the atonement been made by the free obedience of a Man-God. The infinite goodness of God was outraged when a passing satisfaction placed in comparison with it was preferred to it. How glorious

was its vindication when Jesus Christ Who, without God's displeasure, might have enjoyed all the goods of earth and heaven, to please Him more faces every sorrow. What are all the sufferings of the reprobate when compared with the expiation which a God dying upon the cross offers to the justice of His Father! Where does God show better that hatred of sin which is essential to Him, than when he so pitilessly follows up, not indeed the disorder, but the mere responsibility in the person of the Holy of Holies?

II. At the same time God shows strikingly and beyond all thought His measureless love for sinners, and His mercy triumphs along with His justice. Whilst He expiates the crimes of His brethren, the Incarnate Word calls on them to join in the expiation. If they hear the call, what shall happen? Behold, since the atonement of the Man-God is infinitely more than enough, it has, along with the virtue of blotting out the greatest crimes, that of meriting the greatest graces. Therefore the sinner who is the greatest criminal, by means of light suffering united through love with the sufferings of his Saviour, may merit along with the pardon of his iniquities the graces which will make him a Saint. A sinner like the Magdalen may in a moment become a sister of Angels, and her sins which but now were as coals of hell-fire upon her head shall become the subject of her thanksgiving and the food of her love.

More yet: these sins shall be for our merciful Saviour, Who pardons them, so many titles of glory,

and the forgiven sinner may justly console himself with having added to the crown of the Son of God as many bright rays as he has committed offences against His Father. The offences are blotted out, but the glory which springs from their expiation shall shine in the crown of Jesus Christ during all eternity.

Listen to the Saviour Himself. The Pharisees reproached Him with the goodness with which He sought after men the most reviled and sat with them at meat. *They that are well*, He made answer, *have no need of the physician, but they who are sick : for I came not to call the just, but sinners* (St. Mark, ii. 17). This was as much as to say to them that His whole mission on earth was limited to the destruction of sin ; but at the same time it was to say that all His glory was to spring from the gravity of the faults atoned for by His grace. This is as true as that the reputation of the physician grows in proportion to the number and intensity of the diseases which he cures. Jesus Christ shall show Himself so much the more a Saviour, He shall merit so much the more His name of Jesus, as He shall have healed wounds the deeper. As many sins as are expiated, so many degrees of glory are added. It is true that the sinner cannot claim for himself the merit of this glory, for he has contributed to it only by his wickedness. Clearly all the merit comes back to the Saviour. But the sinner may well find in it the subject of immense consolation and eternal gratitude.

How many things might still be said on this

great subject ! How easy it would be by considering it from another point of view to show in its very deepest mystery, in that reversing of things which makes the Innocent One bear the responsibility of His brethren's crimes, the divine consecration of one of the deepest laws of the social order. How glorious, could we fix our gaze upon it, would seem the victory of the Head of the army of the elect. Entering naked and unarmed into the lists, He has won it over the Prince of darkness, who is armed with every advantage gained by forty centuries of triumph ! But, aside from this subordinate point of view, let us turn to the whole general aspect of this great work. Can we deny that through Jesus Christ God has drawn from moral evil a glory beyond measure ? Can we doubt that all this glory flows back upon the One Who has wrought it ? Ought not we rather to say that the honor of the redemption first of all belongs to the Incarnate Word Who has executed it, and only through Him reaches God the Father, Who is its last end even as He was its first beginning ?

III. To Him also must be given the glory not less striking, but alas ! of mournful splendor, to rise up to God from the impenitent dwellers in the city of tears.

Jesus Christ died for all. At some moment of their lives all have been put by God's mercy in condition to take possession of the heavenly inheritance, which He had acquired for them by His blood. God alone knows the secret paths by which He tried

to bring back so many souls who to all appearance were separated from Him beyond recall by the very circumstances of their birth. All that we have to do is to believe firmly that, apart from children dead without baptism and adults who have never had full use of their free will, not one reprobate crossed the threshold of the abyss until he had very deliberately refused the salvation which was offered him and had trampled under foot his Redeemer's blood. But if this is true, is it not to this merciful Redeemer, Whose call they have refused to hear and Whose graces they have scorned, that throughout eternity the terrible expiation of their despair shall be due? They shall understand what they are by their own fault, and what they might have been by His goodness; they shall understand the fruit His blood would have borne in them had they permitted it to have its effect upon their souls, and the fearful compensation they are constrained to give because they have despised it. How will it be possible for them not to confess that He was truly their only Saviour, the only foundation on which they should have built, the corner-stone on which they might have rested had it not been for themselves, and against which they have been broken because they have striven against it.

It is true, therefore, that evil like good of necessity turns to the glory of the Incarnate Word. God the Father constrains the enemies of His Son in spite of themselves to come one after the other and bend before His throne and serve at His footstool,

and even their resistance shall exalt His glory. If their resistance is atoned for by sincere repentance, it shall make His mercy shine forth ; and the mercy of God shall be manifested with so much the more splendor as it triumphs over more obstinate resistance and heals maladies more deeply rooted. But when the rebellious soul hardens itself and dies in its sin, then it is God the Father Who takes into His own hand the cause of His outraged Son and constrains the guilty one in eternal punishment to expiate that infinitely precious blood which he has trampled under foot. We cannot doubt that all the men who are in the world, even as all the creatures who are in the universe, are but instruments Providence employs for the great end of all, which is the glory of Jesus Christ.

Not a movement in heaven, on earth or in hell, which does not advance this great work ! Some labor at it as faithful servants who work out the will of their master, or better as devoted children taken up with the interests of their father. Others are like slaves who, with no other recompense than the scourge, do just the contrary of what they would wish to do. We may choose between these two conditions. On one side there is freedom, love, hope, and a throne at the side of God ; on the other is the slavery of Satan and a part in his despair, in his hatred and his eternal pain.

V.

The peoples should glorify Jesus Christ by recognizing His Kingship.

We are still far from having gone through all the titles which, in the Person of the Incarnate Word, accompany the glorious title of Mediator. Our subject, however, does not demand this of us. But there is one of these titles which we cannot pass by in silence, because it sums up the rights of our Divine Saviour over peoples as well as over individuals, and consequently allows us to complete what we have to say on His providential mission. This title is that of King.

I. There is no prerogative which has been more solemnly and in a way officially attributed to God the Saviour than this. The angel who announced His birth to Mary at the same time declared *Of His kingdom there shall be no end* (St. Luke, i. 32). Scarcely was He born when kings hastened from the depths of the East to proclaim His title in the very palace of Herod, and came to lay their presents at His feet. Later on the whole Jewish nation, united in Jerusalem for the celebration of the Pasch, acknowledged in Him the meek and gentle King whom the Prophet Zacharias predicted ; and Jesus Himself, to promote this acknowledgment on their part, came forth from His wonted reserve and used His temporal

power to take to His own service the beast of burden that should serve to His triumph. More than this: even Pilate, impelled like Caiphas by a prophetic spirit of which he was not conscious, inscribed on the Cross and, in spite of all opposition, maintained there the title of King, which Jesus Christ took into His full possession by His death. The splendor of His dignity, so far from being effaced by His suffering, was recognized in this state by the chosen thief who asked Him a place in His kingdom. Thus even on earth Jew and Gentile, the holy prophets of the ancient synagogue, the repentant robber and the cowardly representative of the Roman power, all agreed in hailing the Incarnate Word with the title of King.

Moreover, who shall dare to refuse Him this title since God His Father with authority decreed it unto Him centuries before His birth, and since He Himself as He mounted up to heaven with no less authority claimed it.

Ask of Me, the Most High has said to Him, *and I will give Thee the Gentiles for Thy inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for Thy possession* (Psalm ii. 8). In these words two promises are comprised: the inheritance and the possession of the inheritance. The inheritance belongs to the Son in virtue of His Sonship; but the taking possession may be more or less delayed. When it shall please the Son of God to take into His hands the full *actual* authority over His kingdom of the earth, we cannot know; but that

He has the full, rightful authority we cannot call in doubt without doubting His divinity. When God the Father united a human nature to the Person of His Son it was impossible for Him not to communicate at the same time all the rights of this Divine Person, so far as that nature was capable of receiving them. Now, the authority of the earth, or rather the absolute empire over all creation, is assuredly one of those prerogatives which in no wise conflict with the humanity of our Saviour.

Therefore we cannot deny Him this royalty and empire. Listen to St. Paul, *God hath appointed His Son Heir of all things* (Hebrews, i. 2). He is speaking of Him through Whom God has revealed Himself visibly on earth, of Him *Who maketh purgation of sins*, and consequently of Jesus Christ, not only as He is God, but as He is man. And thus he at once shows us the Most High obliging the very Angels to adore this God-Man *when He bringeth Him into the world* (*ibid.*, 6). Elsewhere the same Apostle sums up in a few words the whole Christian philosophy of history. He shows us the earthly life of humanity as the warring period of the reign of the Saviour, whereas eternity is the period of triumph and of peace. When He comes forth from the bosom of His Father the Divine Warrior promises to subject to Him at the price of His own blood the rebellious earth ; and the Father, on His side, promises to crown His combats with full victory. This struggle of God the Son in behalf of His Father, and of God the Father in favor

of His Son, is what we see in way of accomplishment before our eyes. For we must confess with St. Paul, *Now we see not as yet all things subject to Him* (Hebrews, ii. 8). All things shall finally be subjected to this Heavenly Conqueror, *when He shall have brought to naught all principality and power and virtue of hell; afterwards the end shall be—end of the present order and the beginning of a better order.* As a victorious general, He shall deliver up the kingdom *to God and the Father* in peace. Meanwhile, *He must reign*, but His authority must be shown by the resistless force with which He puts under foot all His enemies. *And the enemy—death which once seemed to conquer Him—shall be destroyed last. Then indeed all things shall be put under Him; and yet undoubtedly He is excepted who put all things under Him.* Then too, *when all things shall be subdued unto Him*—with the whole of creation fully subjected to His power—He shall acknowledge with solemn homage the authority of Him from Whom He holds all His power—*Him that put all things under Him.* Thus God, Who is all in Him, shall be through Him *all in all* (1 Corinthians, xv. 24–8).

St. Paul then allows no doubt of the Kingship of Jesus Christ in the present order quite as much as in eternity.

But Jesus Christ Himself, if possible, is still more explicit. When He was about quitting His Apostles and was to confide to them His spiritual authority, He seems to have made it a point clearly

to lay down His rights. In this wise He speaks to them: *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth* (St. Matthew, xxviii. 18). Therefore He is not alone the High Priest of the new law, but He is also the King of kings. If He had no royalty but that spiritual Kingship which is confounded with His Priesthood, He would not have all power. If He ruled at will only the blessed spirits, He would not have all power on earth as in heaven. Therefore He is very truly a King, a spiritual King and a temporal King, the King of souls and of bodies, of peoples as well as individuals. Other kings hold their dominion only from Him. They keep it only as He is pleased to wish, and they are far more strictly bound to obey His laws and glorify Him than their own ministers are bound to obey them. Therefore, to acknowledge loudly Jesus Christ as their supreme Lord, to guide themselves in all their relations, civil and political, according to the maxims of His Gospel, to recur to Him in their necessities and to thank Him for their successes, to vindicate His majesty from public outrages done to Him and to favor the extension of His kingdom on earth—such are the essential duties of sovereigns and of peoples, from the time of the Incarnation.

To doubt it would be to doubt the Incarnation itself. We should believe that the Son of God came into the human family, that He sanctified the world by His blood, that He reigns in Heaven over the whole universe—and yet we would persuade ourselves

that the nations of the earth are free to look upon Him as though He had not come, and to treat Him as a foreigner. He has published a law which reaches to every relation of men with men, and yet in all social and public relations this law would be as a dead letter. The angels of Heaven are bound to glorify Him, and the peoples of the earth would not be so bound. This would not only be an absurd lack of reason but also a revolting impiety.

II. We can have no doubt of this. The same law that obliges the peoples to glorify God in their collective existence and their social action, obliges them also to glorify Jesus Christ.

When God the Father sent Him into the world and made Him the Head of all humanity, He gave Him empire over the peoples no less than dominion over individual souls; or rather since man cannot live in isolation and since society is an essential condition of his nature, the individual royalty of Jesus Christ cannot be conceived apart from His social royalty. The establishment of this royalty on earth is the end which Providence pursues in the revolutions of the modern world, just as the preparation for this royalty was the end of the revolutions of the ancient world.

Each people has its share in this great work. They come forward, one after another, at the time marked out by Providence. Power is given them to work out their mission, and according as they fulfil it with more or less fidelity they receive as a recom-

pense the success which produces the glory and the good things that make up prosperity. Thus, before the coming of Jesus Christ all the great monarchies—the Chaldeans and Assyrians, the Medes and Persians, the Greeks and the Romans—were, one after the other, brought into relation with the people who held the promise of the Messias and were called to help on the destinies of this people. At the moment when they fulfilled this mission was the height of their greatness. Never was Chaldea greater than under Nabuchodonosor, when Daniel was preaching in Babylon the coming of the Messias. Never was Persia more glorious than at the moment when Cyrus was reading that prophecy wherein he is represented as the type of the great Redeemer to come. Never were the Greeks so formidable as when Alexander venerated the Holy Books in Jerusalem, and never was Rome stronger than when she concluded with the Machabees a treaty of alliance. God seems to have raised up these different peoples, one after the other, only that they might the better see the light; and their decline began only from the day when they wilfully closed their eyes to the light which had been presented to them.

Thus, too, in the modern world, the people of the North, when they had come forth from the forests where they had passed their infancy in barbarism, were brought into the presence of Jesus Christ, and summoned to put to His service the unconquerable energy which He had bestowed upon them in order

that they might execute His justice on idolatrous Rome. We are well aware of that true greatness which Jesus Christ bestowed upon them as the recompense of their services.

Thus, too, shall it be until the end of time with all the nations which shall come forth upon the stage of the world. Their appearance, their growth, and their triumph are unavoidably governed by the same law and guided toward the same end. We can say that it is only from the moment when they are brought into contact with Jesus Christ that the different peoples come to a consciousness of themselves and definitely take their place in the human family. Until then they only vegetate in a childhood more or less rude; their life is rather animal than human; all true progress is forbidden them; the Divine impulse is wanting to them.

Man acquires the full use of his reason and, in all the force of the word, becomes a moral agent only when he learns to know God, his first beginning and last end. In the same way, the peoples come to the full consciousness of their destinies and the power of working them out, only when they gain the knowledge of the God-Man, Whose authority overrules all human society and Whose glory is the term of their revolutions.

Therefore Providence has neglected no means to make the Christian peoples understand from their beginning this supreme law of their existence and this necessary condition of their prosperity—their

obligation to serve Jesus Christ and to glorify Him. It is in the preamble of the Salic Law, in the Capitularies of Charlemagne, in the Testament of St. Stephen, the first king of Hungary.*

There we see with what clearness, in those times which we call barbarous, there had been grasped the fairest idea which the human mind has ever conceived—the idea of a Christian society. Later on, to prevent this light from being obscured, God did not fear to work miracles. We might cite many. Let us content ourselves with one which cannot be denied, unless we wish to give the lie to the most certain monuments of history. All the researches of science in regard to Joan of Arc have ended only in bringing out more clearly her supernatural mission. Now, according to her own testimony, the aim of her mission was to restore the kingdom of France into the hands of Charles VII. on condition that he would do

* From an historical work of Augustine Thierry we take the translation of a part of the Salic preamble :—

“Ever rule Christ Who loves the Franks: may He keep their kingdom and fill their leaders with the light of His grace; may He protect their army; may He grant them the signs which witness to their faith, the joys of peace and happiness; may our Lord Christ direct in the ways of piety the rule of those who govern: for this is the nation which, brave and strong, shook from its neck the harsh yoke of the Romans, and which, after it had known the holiness of baptism, sumptuously adorned with gold and precious stones the bodies of the holy Martyrs whom the Romans had burned by fire, mutilated by the sword, or torn by wild beasts.”

homage for it to the King of Heaven, who promised on His part to do for him as He had done for his ancestors. At her first interview with the king, Joan said to him, "The King of Heaven commands you, by my voice, to be consecrated and crowned in the city of Rheims, and you shall become the vicar of the King of Heaven, as every true king of France should be." It is in the name of this same King of Heaven, the Son of the Virgin Mary, to Whom alone belongs the kingdom of France, that Joan summoned the king of England to evacuate it at once.

Alas, it is far from being the case that this incomparable dignity of vicars of Jesus Christ for the temporal government of the people has been perfectly understood, whether by Charles VII. or by his descendants. Let us suppose for a moment that all had understood it as did St. Louis. What would have happened? The great schism of the West would have been impossible, for surely they would have ranked the interests of the peace of the Church above all the rivalries of nations. Without having recourse to the hateful severity which the house of Valois intermingled with guilty weakness, they would have prevented heresy from invading the kingdom and would have spared it those religious wars which, for half a century, were its devastation. All the vital forces expended by these two lamentable revolutions would have been used in increasing the national prosperity. The abuses which were their consequences would have been prevented or repressed. The dis-

orders of the clergy and of the nobility would have been corrected by the agreement of the two powers. The vices of the old system would have been eliminated before the bloody revolution of the last century had been provoked. What would not have been the prosperity of France within itself and its power without? We can scarcely doubt that its irresistible ascendancy would have led other nations to adopt this great Christian scheme of politics—the only system which safely watches over every interest, and provokes no jealousy. And if it had come to this point, how much more prosperous would be the condition of the world to-day than it is in reality?

Europe, instead of being enfeebled by its own dissensions at the time when the discovery of the compass put the empire of the world into its hands, might have leaped forth, strong in its union, to the conquest of universal empire; and, at this present hour, Christian civilization everywhere triumphant would make of all humanity one great family peacefully occupied in working out the mission which God gave it from the beginning—to *order the world according to equity and justice* (Wisdom, ix. 3). But the kings would not understand! They preferred a political system of jealousy and expedients to that lofty policy of principles and Christian devotedness. For the Divine Thought which moves worlds, which would have given them resistless power had they frankly relied upon it, they substituted the petty calculations of their own ambition and the revolutions

of dynasties. Heresy which combats Jesus Christ, and the Church which glorifies Him, became in their hands tools to be used indifferently, turn by turn, as they believed it to be their interest. They did not seek in the first place the Kingdom of God and His justice, and for this reason they have lost even that which they sought and which God would have added to them without fail.

And yet how patient has God been toward them ! How many times has He replaced within their hands that power which they had so well deserved to lose ; how many times has He set them once again on the way from which they had departed to cast themselves into the abyss.

What He did for the ancient house of France is what He does for every government which events bring into power in Christian societies. To all He makes the same proposal. He offers to glorify them if they will consecrate themselves to establishing the Kingdom of His Son. If we reflect well upon it, we shall see that the moment when they accept His offer is the period of their greatest splendor. May the great God, Who wills the happiness of the peoples, give to those who govern them the light and strength necessary to understand and fully accept this mission, to work it out without allowing themselves to be hindered by any obstacle and to undergo with courage the trials at the price of which they are to purchase certain triumph !

III. So far we have sought in the designs of God

only a demonstration of that necessary bond which exists between the destinies of the peoples and the fidelity with which they labor for the glory of Jesus Christ. It will be easy for us to find a new proof of this truth in the effects produced upon the world by the Incarnation of the Son of God.

Let us note it well, the Incarnation of the Eternal Word of God has created for modern peoples, along with new duties, needs and exigencies which the ancients knew not. In vain will Christian nations in revolt try to content themselves with that light sum of religious truth which might suffice to pagan nations for reaching a high degree of splendor. Ever since the blood of a God flows in the veins of humanity, it has started up therein boundless and insatiable ambitions.

Look through the historians who have drawn out the most faithful pictures of ancient society. Seek there some trace of those aspirations toward equality and fraternity which torment the modern world. Whence comes it that those immense herds of slaves, whom the legislations most extolled for their wisdom brought down to the level of the vilest cattle, seemed not to suspect that they were the equals of the master to whose tyrannical caprice they were subjected? Whence comes it that they bore so patiently a yoke which Christian humanity could no longer support? Whence comes this contrast between the jealous sensitiveness of the lower orders in modern times and the patient degradation of ancient slavery?

Whence comes it if not from the indestructible influence which the Christian revelation exercises over the very hearts that reject it? Modern society may have put away the heavenly consolations and divine assurances which Jesus Christ came to bring into the world ; but it is not able altogether to stifle the instincts of greatness which He has awakened in the human soul. It may have forbidden itself to hope in His promises ; but it cannot succeed, in spite of every effort, in hoping in any other Saviour nor in contenting itself with a lower elevation than that to which He has called it.

For centuries society has been accustomed to see Jesus Christ in the twofold authority which presides over the religious and the civil order, and while it obeyed His vicars it gave obedience only to Him, the Man-God. Henceforth society knows not how to bend before an authority which is merely human. The poor, who once respected and loved the rich, while they saw in them the ministers of the charity of Jesus Christ, are no longer able to forgive them their wealth now that it is shown to them as a mere gift of chance and the food of selfishness. In one word, the social balance can never be recovered until the cross of a God Who made Himself as nothing adds to the lot of the wretched all the weight of His divine hopes.

In the same way, the glories of the Christian faith have given to minds, through their relation to religious dogmas, needs which no other worship had

found along its way. Outside of Christianity, see how all the religions have covered entire continents with the shadows of their deadly errors. They offer to human reason no motive of credibility which in the least resembles truth: their dogmas are but a tissue of revolting absurdities. Their history is made up of inept and disgusting fables, their worship, which one would say had been invented with the aim of degrading human nature, unites in equal proportion obscenity with savagery; and yet for centuries these infernal religions found in their adherents the blindest docility. One would say that the intelligence of these unhappy races had been paralyzed; whereas, in the midst of nations which Christianity has enlightened, those very minds which reject its light are devoured by uneasy curiosity and unceasingly bring every truth in question, and appear equally incapable of gaining certitude or of resting in error.

We may then assert in all confidence, that apart from Jesus Christ there is henceforth for the peoples of the world no other faith nor certainty, neither hope nor rest.

Each day it becomes more evident that for the modern world there is no other alternative: either it must re-establish the empire of Jesus Christ, or overthrow the last support which upholds the social order. Apart from the authority of Jesus Christ, apart from the religion of Jesus Christ, there can be no religion and no authority. And as authority and

religion are the two most essential elements of society—the first constituting its organization, and the second maintaining its unity and harmony—we have the right to conclude that outside of the Christian society there is no society possible in the modern world. Either Jesus Christ or barbarism !

CHAPTER III.

THIRD LAW OF PROVIDENCE: THE KINGDOM OF JESUS
CHRIST IS TO BE ESTABLISHED IN THE WORLD
BY THE CHURCH.

THIS final law, if we once come to understand it thoroughly, will bring out in its fullest light the designs of God on peoples as well as on individuals. By its means we shall be in condition to understand, in their most practical application, the conditions of our salvation and our progress.

God does everything with order. He does not throw out into the world His creatures without union and mutual dependence, in order that they may work out their destiny individually and alone. On the contrary, He desires that in the midst of their boundless variety there should reign a unity which outside of Him shall reproduce the perfect unity of His own essence.

Undoubtedly God is the first and only principle of all things ; it is He who has created all and preserves all and governs and directs all toward its end. Yet, though He acts everywhere, nowhere does He act alone. Everywhere He makes use of the action of creatures to preserve and set in motion other creatures, so that while He does all He seems to do nothing. In the same way, God indeed wills to be

the common end of all things, but He also wills that created things should tend in common to this end, and that they should attain it, one by the other, so that the most perfect only attain it immediately and lead up to it creatures that are less perfect. From this springs that wonderful hierarchy which subordinates one to the other all created beings and makes of all creation one great body of admirable proportion, wherein spirits are the soul and life circulates by an uninterrupted action of one member on the other.

It is not otherwise in the moral order. Jesus Christ, as we have seen, is at once the beginning and the end of this order. His grace is its beginning, as His glory is its end. But the souls which make up the moral world are not to receive individually and alone the grace of Jesus Christ and are not to procure His glory individually and alone, any more than the beings which make up the physical world are to receive individually the action of the Creator and to tend to their last end alone. Unity is the attribute of the Word and of the Holy Ghost as much as that of the Father. It is, therefore, to be the law of the redemption and of the sanctification of souls, quite as it has been the law of creation.

Therefore, there shall be in the world of souls, as in the world of bodies, a hierarchy which shall constitute its beauty, order, strength, and life.

Undoubtedly, far more than in the physical order God shall be everywhere present in it, and shall

everywhere act. But there, as in the physical order, He shall not act alone. It is the light of the Eternal Word which alone shall enlighten spirits; but this light shall be communicated to them by other spirits. It is the heat of the Holy Ghost which alone shall enkindle hearts; but this heat shall be communicated to them by other hearts.

There too, as in the firmament, shall be chief stars which shall give movement to the others, and shall draw them in their attraction around the Sun of Justice, which is Jesus Christ. All that shall refuse to yield to this attraction, all that shall put itself beyond the pale of this supernatural hierarchy and society, shall thereby put itself beyond the influence of the Divine Sun; for outside of the moral hierarchy there is only moral nothingness—that is to say, sin and condemnation—just as outside the physical hierarchy there is nought but physical nothingness.

This moral hierarchy, this society of souls who together and in common tend to the glorification of Jesus Christ and communicate each to the other its own light and grace, we have no need of naming specially. There is no one who does not recognize under these features the Catholic Church.

The Church is, therefore, the necessary intermediary between men and Jesus Christ, or rather the Church is Jesus Christ Himself continued and completed by humanity, just as she is humanity made divine through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ.

The Church is a great body, all of whose mem-

bers receive from Jesus Christ, their Divine Head, life and heat, strength and love. The Church grows ever through the ages, and ceases not to draw new elements from the bosom of the corruption of human generations to assimilate them to Jesus Christ, until at last the mystical body of the Man-God shall have attained its full growth, and the world which exists only in view of its formation shall be destroyed and all its members shall rejoin their Divine Head in the joys of their true country.

The Church, then, is in reality nothing else than the complement of the Incarnation and the continuation of Jesus Christ. It is through her that the teachings of Jesus Christ are to be transmitted to us. It is by her that all His precepts are to be intimated to us. By her, the heat of His love is to enkindle our hearts; and by her the water of grace that makes alive is to be poured forth in our souls.

Through her our Divine Saviour follows out in the world that work which He but began during the thirty-three years of His mortal life. In her He undergoes the same trials, combats the same enemies, suffers the same persecutions and the same martyrdom, He gives us the same examples, works the same miracles, renders to God His Father the same witness, and shows to our wretched humanity the same merciful condescension and the same generous devotedness.

But if this is true, we must of necessity admit that the glorification of the Church, conjointly with

the glorification of Jesus Christ, is the great duty of humanity and the end which humanity must necessarily pursue, if it would correspond with the designs of the Creator and enter into possession of the heritage and bliss which is its destiny.

We have really no need of other proof to demonstrate the truth of this last law of Providence. However, as it is of chief importance to our end that it should be perfectly understood, we shall seek its demonstration, not now in the thought of God, but in the very nature of things. From this second point of view, it will be easy to convince ourselves that obedience to the Church and union with her is, for individuals and for peoples and for all humanity, the necessary means of sharing in the fruits of the redemption and consequently the indispensable condition of salvation, of progress, and of happiness.

I.

The Church is the source of salvation and progress for individuals.

If there is anything evident in the world, it is that the progress of society depends upon the progress of the individuals of which society is made up. In the same way, on the progress of societies depends the progress of all humanity, which is simply the sum total of earthly societies.

Reason tells us this, but modern rationalism thinks otherwise. For it the progress of humanity is everything; the progress of the individual, on the contrary, is an insignificant thing with which it scarcely deigns to occupy itself. There is no happiness of which they do not dream for the species; what they forget is to point out to individuals the duties whose accomplishment can alone secure this happiness. They trace magnificent plans for the crowning of the edifice, but they do not disquiet themselves about how the foundation is to be laid.

The Church does not act in this way. In her and in her alone, human nature finds with its true unity every element of its perfection. What, indeed, is the humanity of pantheistic rationalism? It is as invariable as a formula of algebra and yet it alone is real, whereas individuals like simple phenomena pass along its surface and disappear without return, as do the shadows of the clouds on the surface of the ocean. What is this but pure fiction? What consequently is the progress dreamed of for this chimerical humanity save a vain chimera? On the contrary, nothing is more rational than the doctrine of the Church. She takes humanity in its living reality—that is, in individuals—and strives to secure its true perfection by laboring for the perfection of individuals with a culture as fruitful as it is hidden and laborious.

The first principle of this making perfect is Jesus Christ, as we have seen. But Jesus Christ, as

we have also proved, manifests Himself to men only through the Church. Therefore the Church also, after Jesus Christ and with Him, is the necessary principle of individual progress.

How, indeed, shall this human being whose life is so short, be able to perfect himself and along with himself his fellows? The first condition of his progress is that from his start along his course, he shall have a clear and exact knowledge of the end whither he should tend and of the way by which he should reach it. In other words he should discern from the first awakening of his intelligence, truth from error and good from evil. Moreover, it is necessary that from the moment when that measureless need of loving, which constitutes his will, shall impose upon his soul its irresistible exigencies, an object shall be proposed to him worthy of his affections and capable of satisfying them.

On the contrary, what can be more incompatible with man's progress than to remain for a time more or less long in uncertainty as to the end he is to attain and the duties he is to perform? What would it be if this uncertainty should last as long as his life? What more fatal to a spiritual soul than to feel a boundless hunger and thirst after love, and to have within its reach only a gross object which, instead of satisfying it, can but degrade it?

Now this precisely is the condition of man outside the Church of Jesus Christ. No other authority than the authority of the Church speaks with cer-

tainty to the child's mind at the age when convictions are formed, and tells him what he should believe and what he may hope for. No other brings within reach of his heart, before the storms of passion have blasted it, that food of heavenly love which alone can give it the fulness of life.

On the contrary, see how easy is the progress of a soul which the Church has taken into her motherly arms from the moment of its appearance on earth. Scarcely has its intelligence begun to unfold itself than the Church presents to it the light of her teachings, whose splendor she is careful to temper that it may not wound the eye still feeble. Read in Bossuet's Catechism the preliminary chapter, which comprises what is to be taught to the smallest children, and you will see how the Church in twenty questions is able to comprise a sum of dogma and moral teaching infinitely more lucid and completer than all the treatises of ancient philosophy. God the Creator and the Master to serve, evil to hate, Jesus Christ to love, His blessed Mother to call upon—these indicate the end to attain, the way to follow, the dangers to avoid, and the means to take. Is not this all? The riddle of destiny whole and entire has already been resolved for the young soul. Already in the features of Jesus Christ the Saviour, the ideal of beauty and of good stands revealed. Morning and evening the gentle representative of the Church, the first priest of the domestic hearth—the Christian mother—shall turn

the eyes of her child toward this ideal and stimulate his heart to rise toward Him on the wings of prayer; and in proportion as the child advances in age, the light shall grow in splendor, the end to be reached shall be seen more clearly, the perfection to be realized shall be better understood, the features of Jesus the Saviour shall start forth with greater exactness and charm. This living and Divine Ideal of all virtue and of all beauty, as it rises higher and higher above the horizon of the understanding, shall exercise over the will an attraction ever stronger, until the solemn day of *Communion* comes, that is to say, the day when between the Ideal and Its image—between Jesus Christ and the Christian—there is set up a perfect identity of feeling and of life.

From this moment the Church shall never cease to recall to the Christian that great duty which comprises at once all his obligations and all his greatness—the duty of reproducing in himself the life of Jesus Christ. To understand how far this tender Mother of souls has succeeded in mingling the thought of Jesus Christ with every circumstance of her children's life, we must leave these countries where the unfolding of her spirit has been arrested by the icy breath of unbelief. We must breathe the pure air of Christianity in countries where the simple manners of the ages of faith have been preserved, in some province which is more Christian, in Tyrol or in Catholic Switzerland. There you shall see at every corner of the way the Cross appear, to recall to

the traveller that at the end of his journey an infinite bliss awaits him purchased at the price of the blood of God. The Cross shall be found in the inn where at evening you shall stop to take your rest ; but here it shall be surrounded by pictures of the Saints, the elder brothers in the great family, devoted protectors who aspire only to make easier for us the imitation of the Divine Model. Instead of unmeaning wishes, all whom you encounter by the way will give you, as their brotherly greeting, the praise of Christ.

Everywhere Jesus Christ is found filling the life of the family. His feasts during the time of each revolution of the sun renew the mysteries of joy or of sorrow which He wrought out while on earth, and give to the seasons of the year a variety and charm which nothing can replace. When is the hearthstone brighter than on Christmas night ? When is the table surrounded by faces more open than when the Alleluia of Easter has scattered afar all the sadness of the week of sorrows ? Each region attaches to each feast its own particular usages, which bind indissolubly the civil with the religious life, and make of the house of Jesus Christ the centre towards which converge all the joys and all the interests of the whole country.

Could we understand it if it were otherwise ? Would it be possible that the tabernacle where the Man-God dwells visibly in the midst of men should not contain all the hopes and all the riches of the true Christian ? There, on the day of his first Com-

munion, he has tasted the purest joys of his life ; thither he shall often come to renew that unspeakable bliss. There, when the six days of labor have bent him to the earth, he shall come on the Sunday to breathe the air of heaven. At the Holy Table the Word of God gives Himself corporally to him, under the appearance of bread ; and from the pulpit, the same Eternal Word communicates Himself to him spiritually under the veil of speech. It only depends upon himself how often he shall be seated at this double feast. The Church has the table ready dressed, and the Divine Food is always ready. By her harmonious chants, by the splendor of her ceremonies, by her incomparable solemnities, she realizes herself that exhortation which she unceasingly addresses to her children, *Sursum corda !* She makes constant efforts to lift their hearts above the earth ; and as the eagle incites her little ones to fly by herself flying above them, so the Church, rising unceasingly towards Jesus Christ, draws her children with her toward that only goal of all their aspirations.

This is how the Church labors unceasingly to make man divine through Jesus Christ. Her teachings and her precepts, her Sacraments and her liturgy have no other end. In this work she employs that immense hierarchy of ministers which embrace the earth as with a net, and that other army, not less numerous, of which the different Religious Orders make up the battalions. To this she devotes herself

unrelentingly, in spite of all resistance, of ingratitude, of bloody persecution.

Would we be assured that she has in her hands all the means necessary for realizing this sublime end, we have only to read the lives of the Saints—that is, the lives of men who have given themselves up without resistance to the action of the Church.

Of this we cannot doubt: in the bosom of the Church man finds from his entrance into life during the whole course of his earthly existence, a living light to guide him, a Divine Model to imitate, an easy way to follow, powerful helps to sustain his weakness: whereas outside of the Church he finds but uncertainty, error, weakness, shameful falls and despair.

The Church then is the necessary bond which attaches us to Jesus Christ, and through Jesus Christ to God. She is, with Jesus Christ, the only way of our perfection; in Him and through Him, she is the life of souls. Undoubtedly, Jesus Christ remains always the Source of all our good, our Liberator, our Redeemer, our Master, our Guide, our Head, the Author and Finisher of our salvation; but it is only through the Church that Jesus Christ transmits to us the fruits of His redemption. It is only through her that He instructs us, guides us, makes us alive and divine. It is then only through the Church that our becoming like to Jesus Christ can be made perfect. He alone can make complete men, by making them divine men. Hence we have the right to conclude

that the true intellectual and moral progress of souls shall be in proportion to the fidelity with which they accept the teachings of the Church, observe her precepts, and take part in her Sacraments.

II.

The Church is the source of progress for the peoples.

I. The Church is the ever fruitful principle of progress in souls; and by the very fact she is the source of progress for the peoples. For the progress of any people, as we have already observed, can be nothing else than the general result from the progress of all its individual members.

What indeed is society other than an order among free agents, just as the world (*the cosmos*) is order among material agents? Now, whence can this order result except from the faithfulness with which each free will shall keep the place marked out for it and make all its own abilities serve to promote the common end? Once this has been laid down, it is clear that an institution which exists in the world with the end of unceasingly recalling to souls their destiny and their duties, of holding ever before their eyes the divine ideal which they should realize, and of furnishing them with all powerful motives to draw near to Him, even at the price of the most painful sacrifices; with the end of leading them to lift

themselves up above their selfish interests to devote themselves unreservedly to the common good—it is clear that such an institution is eminently social, and that the progress of the peoples shall of necessity be in proportion to the influence which they give to this institution in their midst.

We do not need to say that this institution is no other than the Catholic Church. History proclaims loudly enough, that from the time that this Holy Church sprang forth from the pierced Heart of her Divine Founder, she has never ceased to fulfil in the world the divine offices which we have pointed out, and thus to labor at the perfecting of societies by perfecting the individuals which compose them.

II. But there is something more than this influence which is already so powerfully exercised by the Church on social progress by means of the elements designed to produce it. We cannot deny her an influence yet more direct, inasmuch as she is the *model society*. She offers in herself to all other societies the divine ideal of their perfection. She thus points out to them by a teaching as practical as it is unceasing the means they are to take to attain their perfection.

By founding His Church, God has done for societies what He has done for individuals by the Incarnation of His Word.

He had in Himself, in the Trinity of His Persons, the ideal of society; just as He had in the sovereign perfection of His Word the ideal of the reason-

able soul. In reality, it is enough to reflect for a few moments on this first mystery of our faith to discover in its luminous darkness the realization in a supreme degree of all the conditions which make a society great and strong, indissoluble and happy.

For what do we find there? The three essential elements of a society: one only Head, God the Father, Beginning without beginning, Who acknowledges nothing above Him; an Eternal Mediator, the Son, Who receives His being from the Father and Who, united with the Father in a common operation, transmits this being to the Holy Ghost; finally, the Holy Ghost, the Third Person, proceeding from the two others in the order of production, and in consequence receiving from them, without of Himself producing anything in the Divinity. And among these Three Persons, types by way of eminence of the three members of all human society—ruler, minister, and subject—we see the realization, with unspeakable perfection, of those relations which ought to unite together these members in order to secure to society all the perfection of which it is capable. We see the authority of the Father, reserving to Himself no other prerogative than that of communicating to the Son and to the Holy Ghost all His riches, all His happiness, His whole Being. We see the Son, the Eternal Mediator, the prime minister of the Father, reflecting back His thought with infinite faithfulness, to transmit it whole and entire to the Divine Spirit, by a co-operation of love. We see, last of all, the Holy

Ghost receiving this ineffable communication of the being of the Father and of the thought of the Son, only to give back to Them by love as much as He has received from Them, to serve as a bond between Them, and to be the consummation of Their unity and Their bliss.

It is impossible for us not to see in this impenetrable mystery the reconciliation of all the opposing tendencies which rend society asunder—the union of perfect subordination with perfect equality; of the most absolute authority in the superior with the most absolute dependence; of submission the most complete on the part of the inferiors with the freest development of all their powers; of utter disinterestedness with unfailing and immediate remuneration for the gift which each makes of himself.

Yes, in this mystery, so scorned by those shortsighted minds who cannot pardon the sun for being too bright for their feeble eyes, in this mystery and not elsewhere must we seek the final answer of all those problems whose explanation our modern societies are demanding—from dreams and daggers.

Yet we must confess the truth. The Most Holy Trinity is the supreme type of the society of reasonable beings; yet this type is raised so high above common intelligences that humanity would never have been capable of following out its realization, had it not become incarnate in a visible society, just as the Eternal Word—the type of the reasonable

soul—became incarnate in a nature like to our own.

This incarnation of the Divine Society in human elements is the Church.

Just as the Incarnate Word is at once God and Man, so the Church is a society at once divine and human. She is divine by her invisible Head, Who is Jesus Christ, true God, and by her Spirit, Who is the Spirit of Jesus Christ, that is to say, of God. She is human, by her visible head who is simply a man, by her members who are also men and sinful men, and lowest of all by the acts which transmit the life of Jesus Christ from the Head to the members, and which are sensible and human acts.

By these latter elements to which no imperfection, no failing of human nature is a stranger, the Church resembles societies that are purely human; and she makes accessible to them the truly divine perfection which she realizes in the midst of these imperfections and failings.

The Church, indeed, is the living image of the ineffable Society of the Three Divine Persons.

In her, as in the Trinity, authority is as condescending as it is sublime. Her authority shares by its origin in the very attributes of the Divinity; and in its exercise it keeps only the attributes of servitude. The Pope calls himself, and is in reality, the servant of the servants of God, because he owes himself, whole and entire, to the Church: *Servus servorum Dei*. Just as God the Father exists only on the

condition of giving to the Son and to the Holy Ghost His being whole and entire, and is nothing outside of the act by which He communicates Himself, so the Sovereign Pontiff possesses the divine prerogative of infallibility only in the act by which he transmits the truth to his brethren ; and this act once past, he is subjected like the lowest among them to the sentence he has pronounced. Moreover he can teach only what he has learned, and he has authority only to make the Divine Law observed.

The pastors of the second rank are submitted like the lowest of the lambs to this supreme authority ; and, like the Son of God, they receive the rays of the divine light only to reflect them upon their inferiors. Whatever riches they may have it is only to scatter them abroad. Along with the divine power of conferring grace they have the corresponding obligation of using this power in favor of all those to whom it may be useful. Like the mountains their heads touch the heavens only to bring down to the hills and lower valleys the moisture which shall make them fertile.

Last of all, in the Church inferiority of rank in no wise carries with it inferiority of merit and glory. The only excellence worthy of ambition in the bosom of this society of souls is holiness. Now holiness is equally accessible to every rank of this hierarchy. The highway is open to all equally that they may reach to sovereign honor, and this way is the royal road of sacrifice. The more a man shall have stripped

himself of self in order to enrich his brethren, the more he shall have sacrificed himself for their happiness, so much the more shall he be, in the eyes of God and the Church, great and rich and happy. The grace of the Holy Ghost, of which the Church is the channel, shall give back to him in consolation and merit and true glory infinitely more than he has sacrificed by humility and abnegation.

It is thus the Church realizes on earth and with human elements the reconciliation of the most irreconcilable things which we admire in the Divine Trinity: hierarchy and equality, authority and control, submission and liberty, disinterestedness and superabundant recompense. All the social problems, which seem so insoluble when we study them outside the Church, we find resolved within the Church. It is with reason therefore that we say that the Church is the model society, and we cannot in good faith mistake the immense influence she exercises under this title and in virtue of her existence alone over the progress of societies.

Is it not she who has completely changed the notion of authority? Once authority was the exploiting of the people for the benefit of the rulers. The Church has made the world understand that authority is only the first of social duties.

The notion of obedience has not been less profoundly changed. Once obedience was an humiliating necessity; under the influence of the Church it has become a glory by becoming a virtue.

The notion of right itself has been transformed by laying its foundation in the common duty of all to obey God. Happiness, when sought after in this life, was the beginning of all disorder ; but placed in a better life as the recompense of the sacrifices of the present life, it has become the motive of the most heroic virtues.

In this way all the social elements have been transformed under the divine contact of the Church. By her existence alone she maintains in the world the practical teaching of this social philosophy. Who can be blind to the bearing of this teaching and the effects which it cannot fail to produce in the very bosom of those societies which seem the least docile to the authority of the Church ?

III. To bring out this demonstration in its fullest light, we should be permitted to unfold before the eyes of our readers the annals of the Church and to show how, in spite of the human weaknesses to which her members have not ceased to be subject, she has fulfilled in relation to earthly societies that mission which her Divine Founder had confided to her. A very little good faith is enough for acknowledging that during the nineteen centuries of her existence she has been in very truth *the light of the world and the salt of the earth* (St. Matthew, v. 13, 14).

She has been the light of the world ; for like unto a divine beacon placed on the summit of the holy mountain, far above the region of storms, she

has not suffered error, even in the darkest hours, utterly to obscure the brightness of truth. And she is the salt of the earth because she defends the nations against the enticements of their dearest tendencies, against the corruption of their prosperity and the depression which would be the natural result of their reverses.

Jesus Christ is the complete man because He is the Man-God, and He is the complement of all men. In the same way the Church, which is the only complete society, is the complement of all other societies. For it is with peoples as with individuals: we find in each one of them, along side of some predominant quality, some predominant defect, and it is these prominences and defects taken together, these lights and shadows, which make up the national character and the special physiognomy of each people.

God wished that it should be so in order that the moral order, not less than the physical order, should show forth that character of variety with unity which constitutes the beauty and perfection of His works. He found it good that peoples like individuals should all have something to blame in themselves and something to admire in others; that they should have need each of the other, and that no one of them should be able with impunity to isolate himself and seek to be self-sufficient.

In the presence of this providential fact, whose reality is proved by the most superficial observation,

it is clear that the perfection proper to each people must consist in giving full development to their predominant qualities and at the same time in neutralizing the influence of their predominant defects. But, just as it is easy to understand that these are in truth the essential conditions of the perfection of a people, so too it is plain that nothing can be more difficult for them than to fulfil these conditions.

How, indeed, can we hope that the rulers shall habitually have the disinterestedness and the courage necessary to struggle against the current of popular prejudice and passion? How can we hope that public opinion, that power which is superior to the rulers themselves, shall patiently consent to subject its pride and caprice to the great interests of truth and morality?

From this point of view, therefore, the peoples will need to be aided by an exterior power which is in a position to make itself respected without ever falling under suspicion; whose power is supreme and yet whose influence is exercised only by persuasion; an authority which captivates that which is most independent in the world—intelligences and hearts—whose spiritual arms reach to the very depths of souls and destroy therein prejudice and stimulate generous instinct. Now, in the present and in the past, we should vainly seek a society which unites in itself these conditions outside of the Catholic Church.

An example will make it possible for us to

measure the bearing of this influence of the Church over national character.

Let us take an example as near ourselves as possible. If we ask what is the special character of the French nation, the entire world will answer that its predominant feature is the spirit of proselytism, which results from a sort of impossibility of keeping for itself what seems to it true, beautiful, and good, joined with a resistless power of making other nations accept its own passions and ideas.

From this point of view, modern France is in no wise different from the France of the Middle Ages. She is to-day what she was then—an essentially missionary people.

At these two epochs her action on other peoples has been equally irresistible; yet how different or rather how opposite are the results. In the twelfth century France as a society took seriously her title of eldest daughter of the Church, and like a true daughter asked from her mother the guidance of her energies. This guidance was not wanting to her. The Church showed to France the sepulchre of Christ stained by Mussulman barbarism, and His Kingdom beleaguered on every side by the anti-Christian empire. France understood, and at the voice of the Supreme Pontiff she answered by her war-cry, "God wills it!" And this cry which spread contagiously through all Europe by means of her proselytism had soon roused all the Christian peoples. Until then the ardor of the French character had

been wrought upon only by vain ambition and murderous discord; but now it was consecrated to the noblest of all causes, and learned to pursue passionately the great interests of the spiritual order.

We know what were the consequences of these heroic struggles. It is true that Jerusalem could not be delivered from the malediction which still weighs heavily upon it, but the anti-Christian empire was wounded unto death; the torrent which threatened to sweep over civilization was forever rolled back from Europe. France herself became more united at home, and established to the confines of the East a moral preponderance which all her subsequent faults have not succeeded in wresting from her. This was the national character of France so long as she was under the influence of the Church.

Six centuries later, weary of the glories which she owed to this maternal influence, France resolved to shake it off entirely and to be sufficient to herself. So-called philosophers, who made their philosophy consist in enfranchisement from the yoke of Incarnate Wisdom, persuaded her that she would find liberty only in making herself independent of the Church which is the living organ of the Divine Wisdom. She believed that the ideal of human society could be found in the absence of every superhuman element. At once she sought to realize this ideal. The ardor of her temperament knew no delay, and the chivalric disinterestedness of her character shrank from no sacrifice. Unhesitatingly she overthrew all

the supports of her prosperity. Under the pretext of destroying abuses which were unhappily but too real, she overthrew the social order on which these abuses were an accidental growth. She cast herself whole and entire, with her most venerable institutions and her most glorious traditions, into the mortar where she was to be crushed and whence, as she hoped, she was to come forth transformed into new youth. And she would not consent to keep for herself the blessings of this re-birth and transformation ; all other peoples must share them with her. A new crusade was undertaken ; but this time it was no longer to the cry “ God wills it ! ” The signal was given by the proclamation of the Rights of Man. The cry of independence—“ I will not serve ! ”—*non serviam*—was to sound upon earth as at the beginning it had resounded in heaven. In response to this cry we no longer see as in the Middle Ages Europe uniting like a single family to push back the fierce tide of Musulman barbarism ; but we see Christian peoples rushing against each other—an immense conflagration started up at one and the same time in the four corners of Europe, threatening to engulf the grandest products of its civilization, and this conflagration was to be quenched only in torrents of the purest blood of France. And this is what our national character produced once it ceased to be directed by the influence of the Church. We are right then in affirming that this benign influence is the source of the true progress of peoples ; and nothing is wanting it seems

to us to the demonstration we have given of it. Not only does the Church, as the model society, offer in herself to all human societies the divine ideal of their perfection and prosperity ; but by her action, which is as gentle as it is effective, she never ceases to urge them forward and to aid them in realizing this ideal. She makes authority divine, and thus renders it more humble ; she exalts obedience, and thus makes it easy. She destroys the antagonism which pride and selfishness had set up between governors and the governed, between rich and poor. On the contrary she causes them to find a common interest in uniting with each other and in mutual devotedness. She develops all the good tendencies of national character, and anticipates its deviations toward wrong. She prevents prosperity from intoxicating and adversity from depressing. Without ever hampering material progress, she does not allow it to become an obstacle to moral progress. In one word, she is in temporal societies what the soul is in the body—a principle of life, of movement, of well-being, and of true greatness.

IV. Let us now put what has been said on the mission of the Church beside the principles already established in relation to the collective duties of a people. We can thus already draw conclusions which will be of the greatest help to us in accounting for the ways of Providence.

We have seen that a people, since it has but a temporal existence, must receive in the course of time

the recompense which it merits for its faithfulness as well as the chastisement which may be due to it for its shortcomings. In a word, the collective duties of a people, unless they are to have no sanction at all—which is repugnant to the Divine Justice—can have only a temporal sanction.

Now, these duties of a people are summed up, as we have proved, in one single duty: to glorify Jesus Christ by obeying His Church, or, what comes to the same thing, to glorify the Church by co-operating with her in the establishment of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. It is solely to put them in condition to accomplish this great duty that a people receives from God riches and power. It is in view of the providential part which they are destined to play in the glorification of Jesus Christ by the Church, that they are endowed with aptitude and tendencies which make up their national character. Each one of them is an instrument fashioned and made ready by Providence to do a certain work, but this work cannot be accomplished unless under the Church's direction. Each one of them is a column designed to adorn and support the divine edifice of which Jesus Christ is the cornerstone; but it is only by the Church, which is the chief pillar and secondary foundation, that each of the stones which are to enter into its construction can be brought into relation with the First Foundation.

From this it follows that a people can deserve the temporal recompenses due on the part of Providence

to fidelity only inasmuch as they are united to the Church, and their revolt against the Church must of necessity be followed by temporal chastisement, in proportion to the gravity of their crime.

This is equally the consequence of the consideration of the designs of God and of the nature of things.

It is true that this temporal sanction of the great law of Providence over the world may be held in reserve during a time more or less long ; the law of trial demands this, for this law is applied to a people as to an individual, and it would be utterly overturned if chastisement immediately followed evil and fidelity were always immediately crowned by recompense.

Therefore, years and perhaps centuries will roll by between the beginning of the revolt and the thunderbolt which shall mark its end. During years and during centuries we may see a people hostile to the Church and flattering itself with the success of its enterprises, while the faithful people are humiliated by their seeming inferiority. Centuries in the life of peoples are as years in the lives of individuals. This necessary delay, in order that trial may have its full merit, may seem very long to human impatience, and it may cause in the ranks of the Church's army many defections.

But for those who have the patience to await the hour of the Lord, that hour shall come at last ; and it shall be so much the more glorious as it shall have

been longer awaited. In faithful nations the Divine Life, preserved in spite of every human obstacle and long growing up in the invisible obscurity of souls, shall at last push forth its vigorous shoots and extend afar like strong branches all those institutions of science and charity, of art and industry which constitute true civilization. *It shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season*—the rich fruit of strength and devotedness, of genius and virtue.

On the contrary, among revolted nations unbelief, the source of darkness, and selfishness, which is the principle of decay, after they have been long combated by the truths and virtues which are the results of the past influence of the Church, shall without fail finish by bringing forth their natural fruit. Little by little the light will go on failing, social bonds will be loosened, authority day by day will lose its prestige, and every right will be more and more brought into question. Souls will be abased, while animal lusts will acquire an influence more and more predominant. The appearance of strength and life which the stimulus of collective interests and national pride may give for a certain time, will disappear under the influence of selfish desires; the great body once so vigorous, when a Christian life circulated in its veins, will soon be but a corpse, and then it will be enough that a hostile people shall spurn it with the foot to cast it into the tomb.

This is what comes of necessity in the train of

all the great movements which impel people toward the Church or drag them far from her. It is by the happy or unhappy consummation of these social tendencies that the history of humankind is naturally divided into great epochs like to those great divisions of time which are marked by the accomplishment of the revolutions of the stars. As the sun, approaching and receding, governs the seasons of the year, so the Church by the increase or diminution of her influence determines the periods of history.

III.

The Church is the source of the progress of humanity.

What the Church is for the nations, she must evidently be for humanity. Humanity, indeed, is only a great society which is made up of all particular societies—the great tree of which Adam is the common root, while the different boughs and branches are the races and nations and families.

After the dispersion of Babel, these races and nations had preserved no unity. Even the memory of their common origin had been lost among the greater number of them. They had been separated by distance, by language, by prejudices and interests, and they scarcely knew how to meet without conflict. From this sprang an obstacle to the progress of humanity, which seemed to be insurmountable.

For when a nation was able to make the conquest of moral truths, of political institutions, of scientific developments or material advantages, far from caring to share all these with other nations, it seemed only anxious to keep its acquisitions from them. There was in existence no society of nations; there was no humanity in the modern sense of the word. There were men, there were families, there were races. The members of humanity existed, but the body did not exist because its members were scattered and rent asunder and united by no bond.

When Jesus Christ became the Head of human nature and gave it in His grace a common principle of life and in His glory a common destiny and common interest, He created humanity; and this humanity, created by Jesus Christ, is nothing else than the Catholic Church.

We have seen how this society of souls unites together by a divine bond the members of particular societies, how it destroys their antagonisms and mingles their rival interests in the great interest of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, toward the establishment of which she makes them work together. We may now look upon her as she unites together the different nations which accept of their own will her influence. She forms from them a single family of brethren in the midst of which she reigns, not by the superiority of temporal power, but by the gentle supremacy of her divine mission and her motherly love.

Let us not speak at present of the exterior action

which the Church has often exercised and which she might have exercised far oftener still to prevent the conflict of peoples, had they consented oftener to accept fully her benign influence. There is an action closer and more irresistible, by which she keeps them united and almost without their knowledge anticipates the disastrous effects of national prejudice and antipathy. This action results from the very idea of the Church ; that is, from the dogma of Christian Faith of which she is the living and immortal realization—from the *incorporation* of all men and all peoples with Jesus Christ. In vain we should seek for a more efficacious means to destroy the rivalry and strife which rend humanity asunder than the mission, given to all the ministers of the Church, to bring back to men without ceasing that they are all called with equal title to share in the redemption of Jesus Christ, to form all together a single body of which He is Head, a single kingdom of which He is Monarch, a single family of which He is Father, and during all eternity to possess the same happiness. This is the true *humanitarian* doctrine, which St. Paul so often recalled to the first Christians, sprung as they were from every race and from every condition of human society. From this he drew the conclusion in his own energetic language : *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus* (Galatians, iii. 28).

By her constant preaching of this doctrine, the

Church labors unceasingly to consummate the work of Jesus Christ. He had for end and aim not only to make souls and peoples divine, but all humanity as well. On the eve of His Passion, this Divine Saviour asked of His Father, as the sweetest reward of all His labors, that all men might be made one—among themselves and with the august Persons of the Divine Trinity—as these Divine Persons are one among Themselves. The Church has been charged with working out this last solemn wish. For eighteen centuries she has labored unremittingly to realize this ideal. She suffers without ever giving away and, undiscouraged, she braves every persecution. To make all humanity participate in the union, the splendor and joys of the society of the Three Divine Persons; to establish between heaven and earth an intercourse of light and love, in which all men shall have their part; to give to the mystical body of Jesus Christ its full development; to establish each one of the societies which are the principal members of this body in the place and part which Providence has assigned it, and to make it find in the performance of this part the full development of its energies; in sum, to rebuild in all its harmony this great edifice of humanity, whose stones had been overthrown by sin and scattered afar, and to give it as its crown the Divinity incarnate in Jesus Christ—this is the social mission of the Church, and this mission she accomplishes with no less fidelity than that which has for its aim the making divine of souls.

From this point of view, which is the only true one, it is easy for us to take in at a single glance in all their unity and variety the vocations of individuals and of peoples. We can understand the reason of the almost unlimited diversities, which we have already pointed out, in national character as well as in individual character.

This diversity has not only for its end to show forth the infinite fecundity of Divine Wisdom, it has also and most of all for its end to mark out for each man and each people their own place in this collective reproduction of Jesus Christ, which is the end and final reason of humanity.

In truth, just as each man should be a reduced image of the Man-God, so humanity should reproduce Him in grand proportions.

Each element of this great body, and especially each one of its chief members, should bring out in bold relief some one of the features which are grouped together in the Divine Model, their union in Him constituting His incomparable perfection. We must not then wonder that the different members are incomplete. Were they not so they could not form a single body. If in the human body the eye comprised all that is found in the hand, and if the hand had all the properties of the eye, where would be unity and harmony and beauty? But that which is wanting in each of the members, it finds in its union with the others. Separate them, and they cannot live for one single instant; for there is no one of them

that possesses in itself all that is necessary to work out its destiny. Unite them, on the contrary, and whatever is incomplete in them will become for each one a means of fulfilling with more perfection its own office and of contributing with more efficiency to the well-being of the body. Thus it is with men and with peoples ; so long as they are not in the place which Jesus Christ has marked out for them in His Mystical Body, so long as they are not closely and generously united together to work out in common their divine destiny, they will be incomplete and feeble ; and whereas the defects of their own character will be a cause of weakness to them, their good qualities even will produce only strife and offence. It will be impossible for them to live the divine life, which is the only life worthy of man. But let them understand their vocation and labor with energy to fulfil it, let them unite in Jesus Christ through the Church, and earth shall see enraptured the transfiguration of humanity take place, to be compared only with the transfiguration of our Saviour on Thabor.

Then shall the Church be glorified by that very glorification which humanity shall receive from her ; and this glory of the Church shall fall back whole and entire on Jesus Christ, her Divine Founder, as the glory of Jesus Christ returns whole and entire to God the Father, from Whom He proceeds. Consequently, the designs of God upon the world shall then receive their full realization ; trials and physical

evil and sin itself shall have served to show forth His divine attributes. All the laws of Providence which are summed up in this last law shall have been fulfilled along with it. By humanity made divine, that is to say, by the Church, all creation shall be reunited to Jesus Christ and through Jesus Christ to God.

The legislation of Providence reveals to us the secrets of Providence. It makes us understand the end and aim, the principles and the chief applications of Providence. The end and aim of Providence is the communication of God's life and happiness to reasonable creatures, the establishing of the divine order.

The elements of this wondrous order are—first of all, God, the first beginning and last end ; next, Jesus Christ, God and Man and therefore the Mediator between God and humanity, just as humanity itself which is spirit and body is the mediator between the world of spirits and the world of bodies ; last of all the Church, that is, humanity united with Jesus Christ and living of His life, as Jesus Christ lives of the life of God.

The pouring forth of this life is the end of all the designs of Providence. God alone possesses it by nature and by most complete identity with it ; the Man-God receives it by His personal subsistence in all its fulness ; reasonable creatures share in it in the measure of their union with Jesus Christ. It is a divine stream, of which God is the infinite source ; it flows within full banks like a grand river, through Jesus Christ ; and thence it pours itself forth on the whole earth in a thousand channels, bringing forth therein the fruits of grace.

Again, the divine order is revealed to us as an immense pyramid, at the summit of which is God, in the midst Jesus Christ, and the Church at the base. This base goes on enlarging in proportion as human generations are multiplied. When it shall have reached its full development according to the plan of the Heavenly Architect, the present world shall have an end and eternity shall begin.

Trial and physical evil, strife and moral evil itself, are the means which Providence uses to prepare the stones which are to find a place in the Divine Edifice. It calls societies as well as individuals to co-operate with Itself in the consummation of this work. It is pre-eminently the work of unity. It began from all eternity in God Whose Divine Persons are united in the most perfect unity of nature. It went on in Jesus Christ, in Whom the Divine Nature and the human nature are united in the unity of the same Person. It reaches out to all men, who are called to unite themselves with God through Jesus Christ in the unity of His Spirit. But it can have its consummation only inasmuch as all humanity, one in the unity both interior and exterior of the Church, shall form but one single family wherein the different peoples are distinct branches but not branches severed from the trunk.

Such are the designs of the Almighty : such are the laws which Divine Providence has imposed on the free activity of men and peoples.

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